THE NEW
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ANT TOLD TO RETURN TO ITS ROOTS IN PAYMENTS SERVICES

People's Bank of China stops short of asking for a breakup of Jack Ma's firm, but stresses necessity of a business overhaul

WEIGHING OPTIONS TO PROTECT ECONOMY

The central bank told Ant to 'rectify' its suite of services, which have expanded from a PayPal-like operation to offer consumer loans, insurance and wealth management. The regulators are weighing the options of carving up Ant's different lines of operation, or splitting its online and offline services to contain the risks it poses to the Chinese economy P9

SLAMMED FOR MONOPOLISTIC TENDENCIES

- Authorities blasted Ant for sub-par corporate governance, disdain toward regulatory requirements, and engaging in regulatory arbitrage. They castigated Ant for monopolistic tendencies too
- The empires built by Jack Ma, Tencent Holdings' chairman Ma Huateng and other tycoons are also under scrutiny

$35 bn

IPO LISTING OF ANT BEFORE THE CENTRAL BANK TORPEDOED IT

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

19 variants of coronavirus already in India, but no cause for alarm

Findings come at a time when the govt has decided to speed up genome sequencing

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @New Delhi

LIKE elsewhere, coronavirus is quietly changing in India, making itself resistant to antibodies. As of now, 19 such variants are already present in the country, researchers associated with multiple government institutions have established.

Scientists attached with the CSIR - Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology in Delhi, the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research and Kurnool Medical College, Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, analysed over 2,40,000 SARS-CoV-2 genome sequences from 133 countries and identified 86 with escape mutants, or variants with genetic changes that make them resistant to antibodies. Nineteen of these 86 variants were found in India.

An escape mutation is one that allows SARS-CoV-2 to evade antibodies specific to the spike protein the virus uses to enter human cells. All vaccines are designed to generate antibodies against the spike protein to try to block the virus' entry into cells.

The findings come at a time when the government has decided to accelerate genome sequencing to track changes in the pathogen after a variant of SARS-CoV-2 in the UK had significant structural and behavioural changes, making it 70% more infectious that the original Covid strain.

"There is no need to be alarmed, but definitely a need to be cautious," Vinod Scaria, a scientist with CSIR-IGIB and joint first author of the paper told this newspaper. "The variations in the virus does not mean that the vaccine will not work against it but is likely to lower its efficacy," he said. "During the trials of the vaccine, too, it needs to be analysed whether those who are getting infected are afflicted with the variant virus," he added.

Scaria said cases of Covid-19 re-infection should also be followed up with genome sequencing.

WAKING UP TO EXPEDITE GENOME SEQUENCING

Of the more than 1.01 crore Covid-19 positive cases reported in India, only about 6,400 samples have been genome sequenced. In contrast, the UK with 2 million cases has already sequenced 1.57 lakh samples

TAC recommends more stringent guidelines

The state's TAC has recommended stringent guidelines on tackling the new strain of SARS-CoV-2, following a meeting of the National Task Force on Covid-19 on Saturday. P3

Experts bat for genomic sequencing surveillance

AJITH M S & RANJANI MADHAVAN @Mysuru/Bengaluru

WHILE the emergence of a new strain of the infectious Covid-19 virus in the UK has triggered concern worldwide, experts here are cautioning against any laxity in studying the virus and are calling for genomic sequencing surveillance across the country, or at least at the state level. They feel that sequencing surveillance will help in containing the virus by isolating only the source, instead of locking down entire cities, states or the country itself, yet again.

Genomics scientist Dr Vinod Scaria of CSIR- Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, said there has never been a continuous and systematic effort in the country to understand the virus, except for sequencing activities that were confined to samples from certain groups or states. CONTINUED ON: P3

As we head into the New Year, **TNIE** brings you curated articles on what 2020 meant for our lives. The first of the series:

DO WE NEED OTHERS?

2020 A YEAR TO REMEMBER FORGET

SUNDAR SARUKKAI

THE Covid pandemic is a disease of its time. For a world which was already becoming more individualistic, here was a virus that made us more isolated. This isolation was driven not by choice but by a fear of others. The pandemic and its consequences made us confront a new phenomenon about the way our society is evolving, particularly on the changing nature of how we relate to other people.

Years pass away like people do. They are there at one moment and then not there the next. But this year did not just pass away. It stayed on and on. For a long period, it was the same day, day after day. We began to recognise the habitual acts that describe our everyday life. Habits, like breathing, are such that we are rarely conscious of them. 2020 was the year in which habits came to the foreground, in which we had to confront our daily habits every day.

In this year, particularly from March, our lives underwent many changes. People travelled much less. Many worked from home and countless others suffered because their work did not allow them this luxury. Across the country, in urban and rural areas, people saw less of others than they had ever done before. They did not visit the homes of relatives and friends as they used to do earlier. The crowds in public spaces, restaurants, places of worship, festivals and sporting events just vanished.

We had lots more time to spend by ourselves, within ourselves. For some, if not many, it was a kind of rediscovery of who we are as individuals. But more importantly, it was also a discovery of how little other people matter to our lives. Not only did people not meet others but they spoke and interacted much less with others. It was not that we were more lonely but only that we discovered new forms of being alone.

Society was already changing before the pandemic struck. Social processes were becoming more centred towards the individual. Swiggy changed the basic social act of eating with others. Instead of sharing common spaces and interacting with the people in hotels and restaurants, Swiggy made it possible to eat on demand, eat by ourselves and where and when we wanted.

Personal technologies had changed our social interactions. Children spent more time lost inside their phones, tabs and the internet. Not only did they spend little time talking to their family but they also had less face-to-face interactions with their friends. Friendship was mediated through Facebook and other creations of a digital media.

All these changes were magnified by our response to the pandemic. They were legitimised by the changing practices during this period. After 2020, it would not be a surprise if online transacting and interacting with others becomes a new habit of the individual as well as of the larger society.

Many find it easier to relate to people through this digital world. This is not surprising since it is indeed difficult interacting with people in person. It is much easier to engage with others through Skype and Zoom. You don't have to listen to everything they say. You can watch something else while they are talking, read emails or listen to music -- practices that many schoolchildren excelled in during online classes! Emotion gets dispersed and dissipated in the online medium compared to face-to-face interaction.

The online medium became the de facto society for those who could afford it. This was not just an urban phenomenon. People across the country tuned into YouTube and other digital platforms for entertainment as well as for learning cooking, music and everything else. The internet also served as a de facto hospital for them as they learnt more about the coronavirus than even some doctors. But this learning was impersonal because the internet functions as an impersonal society, one which replaced the physical structures of social practices and social behaviour.

CONTINUED ON: P4

IPS officers' tiff over Safe City tender heats up

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE spat between the two IPS officers over the tender process in the ₹619 crore Bengaluru Safe City Project seems to be getting uglier. On Sunday, IPS officer Hemant Nimbalkar claimed that the tender process was transparent, amid allegations of irregularities.

Hitting back at Nimbalkar again, Home Secretary D Roopa alleged that he had given wrong facts, misleading the government, the media and public.

Nimbalkar, Bengaluru Additional Commissioner of Police (Administration) and also chairman of the tender inviting committee, said he had written to the Chief Secretary on December 7 informing him that someone had impersonated the Home Secretary and tried to access classified information pertaining to the preparation of RFP (Request For Proposal) and details of tenders. P5

WITH THIS ISSUE
THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex YOUR LIFE COACH
32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF edex (TABLOID), 4 OF CITY EXPRESS

VOTING AT THE GRASSROOTS

Polling began at 7 am and ended at 5 pm across 20,728 booths

Polling for the first phase was held on December 22; counting for both phases is scheduled for December 30

1,05,431 candidates were in the fray for **39,378** seats, while 3,697 have already been elected unopposed

Voting in second phase, according to SEC data: **80.71%**

80,000 security personnel were deployed

BENGALURU URBAN clocked the lowest figure with only **67.48%** of the voters casting their ballot

BENGALURU RURAL recorded the highest percentage of **91.86%**, followed by Chikkaballapur at **89.58%**; Ramanagara came third with **88.27%**

• FULL COVERAGE P4

AIADMK says no to coalition govt in TN

T MURUGANANDHAM @ Chennai

IN a razor-sharp message that was loud and clear to its allies, the AIADMK on Sunday categorically ruled out any possibility of a coalition after the 2021 Assembly elections, asserting that the new government will be led only by the ruling Dravidian party.

Mincing no words during his rather explosive speech, the AIADMK's deputy coordinator, KP Munusamy, said, "The AIADMK will form the next government even if national and state parties join as alliance partners. There is no need to speak about a coalition government. If any party, coming forward for an alliance arrangement, aspires to form a coalition government, please rethink." He also reaffirmed that Edappadi K Palaniswami is the chief ministerial candidate of the alliance. Though he did not mention any party, his remarks were a straight response to the BJP, which has been speaking about sharing power.

Addressing a gathering after CM Palaniswami and his deputy, O Panneerselvam, formally kick-started the AIADMK campaign in Chennai, Munusamy said forming a government on their own has been the long-standing policy of late leaders MG Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa. "It is the firm stand of all the functionaries and the cadre, including Palaniswami and Panneerselvam."

Munusamy's remarks come two days after Union minister Prakash Javadekar had evaded reporters' questions about the BJP leadership endorsing Palaniswami as the CM candidate. P5

Nitish Kumar makes loyalist head of Bihar JDU

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @Patna

A day after the opposition predicted copycat defections would rock the JDU further, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar resigned as the national president of the party on Sunday and appointed his political confidant and ex-IAS officer Ram Chandra Prasad Singh Singh as the successor for the next three years.

Dismissing the opposition claims that Arunachal Pradesh-like defections posed a threat to the party, JDU chief general secretary K C Tyagi said that Nitish handed over the reins to RCP Singh to play a bigger role in national politics. While maintaining that the alliance with BJP was under no strain, Tyagi said that Nitish will campaign vigorously in West Bengal, where the party will contest alone.

However, sources said the JDU was worried about an Arunachal rerun in Bihar, with speculation that Singh's elevation was tied to it.

Singh is Nitish's trouble shooter and is credited with bringing JD(U) back in the NDA fold in 2017. His elevation is seen as attempt to stem turbulence in the JDU outside Bihar as it frees up Nitish to work towards strengthening the party in other states. Singh is known to be somewhat soft towards the BJP in NDA circles here.

A bureaucrat-turned-politician, Singh has been the vice-president (organisation) of party, and its Rajya Sabha MP.

EXPRESS READ

Rajinikanth's health improves, discharged

Hyderabad: Superstar Rajinikanth was on Sunday discharged from a hospital here, where he was treated for blood pressure fluctuation, after his condition improved, authorities said. The 70-year-old actor was admitted to the hospital here on December 25 with severe hypertension and exhaustion, it said | P5

MANN KI BAAT

PM's 'atmanirbharta' pitch: K'taka youths in focus

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru/Udupi

IT was double delight for Karnataka on Sunday when Prime Minister Narendra Modi quoted two instances to highlight the dedication and perseverance of youths in his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' address on Sunday.

The PM, who stressed on 'Atmanirbharta' during difficult times, spoke about the work of the Yuva Brigade, a group of youngsters, who took up the task of renovating the dilapidated Lord Veerabhadreshwara temple at Ganjam near Srirangapatna last month during their free time. For those with a can-do approach and a will-do spirit, nothing can be far, he stressed.

The Yuva Brigade at work on the temple at Ganjam near Srirangapatna | EXPRESS

For Chandrashekhar and the other young volunteers, it was a weekend as usual with their latest initiative of cleaning the bathing ghats of Kapila river near Mysuru on Sunday. They were surprised when they started getting calls from friends, informing them about the PM making mention of their work.

The youths, who are all employed full-time, have been engaged in renovating and cleaning several temples and Kalyanis (step wells) during their free time. An elated Chandrashekhar said that they did not expect their efforts to be recognised by the PM himself. "Last week, we got several calls from a person seeking details about our work in Ganjam. We never thought it was for this," he said. The recognition has lifted their spirits and they plan to take up more such initiatives, he said. P5

An unbeaten 104 from Ajinkya Rahane (left) helped India take 82-run lead on Day Two of the second Test against Australia at the MCG on Sunday | AP

MELBOURNE IDENTITY

India take lead @ MCG

At 63-3, India were in a spot of bother. But in Ajinkya Rahane, India found a saviour. The stand-in captain, coming in at No 4, scored a patient century, his 12th in Tests, as India ended Day 2 with a lead of 82 runs with five wickets still remaining. Rahane and Ravindra Jadeja have so far added 104 runs for the sixth wicket which has put Australia on the backfoot at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

104*

is Rahane's second Tests century at the MCG. He had scored 147 in 2015. Only three other Asians — Vinod Mankad, Sadiq Md, Majid Khan have scored two hundreds at this venue.

1

THIS IS RAHANE'S FIRST TEST CENTURY BATTING AT NO 4. AND ALSO HIS FIRST AS CAPTAIN.

2nd

Indian captain after Sachin Tendulkar (1999) to score a hundred at Melbourne.

ALMANAC TODAY

• **Monday:** 28/12/2020 • **Year:** Sarvari • **Ayana:** Dakshinayana
• **Ritu:** Himantha • **Masa:** Margashira • **Paksha:** Shukla • **Tithi:** Chaturdashi (Wholeday)
• **Nakshatra:** Rohini 3:30 pm • Moon in Mithuna Rashi • **Rahukaala:** 07:30 am to 09:00 am
• **Gulikakala:** 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • **Yamaganda:** 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER

MIN 16°C | MAX 28°C

FORECAST Sunny

Sunrise	6.40 am
Sunset	6.02 pm
Moonrise	4.36 pm
Moonset	4.55 am

RTE fees already reimbursed to schools: Minister

Assures schools of refunds if not given yet; pvt schools claim funds not reached them

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

PRIMARY and Secondary Education minister S Suresh Kumar on Sunday hit back at private schools who have been accusing him of holding up their RTE reimbursements. Kumar said that schools that have furnished the necessary documents have been reimbursed.

As per officials, in 2016-17, 12 schools did not furnish documents, in 2017-18, the number of schools increased to 29, in 2018-19, 71 schools, and in 2019-20, 1,039 schools did not furnish documents, and hence, have not received reimbursement, he added.

"In case schools have not got their money despite following procedures, I will ensure action is taken against erring officers and the money will be released," Kumar said, adding that he has no answer for those who do not want to submit their documents.

Kumar said that this year, RTE reimbursements for the academic year were completed in record time, so that private schools were not inconvenienced during the pandemic. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa had announced the first two instalments to be released on June 5, 2020. The third instalment of Rs 137.5 crore was released on September 28, and the fourth and final instalment of Rs 137.5 crore was made on December 10. With this, the entire year's RTE amount has been refunded, he said.

> **In case schools have not got their money despite following procedures, I will ensure action is taken against erring officers and the money will be released**
>
> Suresh Kumar, Minister

Despite the prevailing circumstances, Rs 550 crore has been earmarked for RTE for the year 2020-21, he said.

He also put the onus of providing job security for teaching and non-teaching staff on private schools, and assured them of the department's assistance, wherever necessary.

"The minister does not know which year's due is being paid in 2021-21. Not a single paisa owed this year has been reimbursed," KAMS General Secretary Shashi Kumar said.

DESI BOLT Kambala champion Srinivasa Gowda bettered the timing of of sprinter and world record holder Usain Bolt by running 132.5 metres in 13.62 seconds in February.

INHUMAN ACT Children salvage school books from the wreckage of their homes in Kariyammana Agrahara, after miscreants mowed down their houses in January | MEGHANA SASTRY

2020 A YEAR TO REMEMBER FORGET

TNIE will showcase the year gone by in a series of evocative photographs that capture the spirit of the times

YOUTH POWER Students hold a candlelight vigil in solidarity with students of JNU, Aligarh Muslim University, and Jamia Millia Islamia, who were attacked while protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act in January | MEGHANA SASTRY

Was Covid +ve engineer in two places at the same time?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

C T Anjanappa, assistant executive engineer from Bommanahalli zone in BBMP, reportedly tested positive for Covid-19, and was hospitalised. Yet, he is said to have gone to office and signed in the attendance register every day. Is it dedication or ignorance, ask the citizens of Bommanahalli.

Chandrashekar V, a citizen, who filed an RTI, told *TNIE* that he had approached Anjanappa seeking information to know the status of encroachment on survey number 24/6 on a rajakuluve in Kodichikkanahalli.

"When I approached Anjanappa, he said that he was admitted in Apollo Hospital, Bannerghatta Road, on July 13 as he tested positive. According to records, he had to be in the hospital till July 27. He said that he was also asked to undergo 14 days home quarantine. I had filed an RTI seeking clarity on the encroachment. The court issued directions to check the documents to get data. During which I also saw the BBMP register where Anjanappa had signed for all the aforesaid days," Chandrashekar said, adding it was a violation of state government and ICMR norms which state that those who test positive must be quarantine.

Anjanappa told TNIE: "I tested positive and was admitted to hospital. I am unaware of the attendance register. It looks like someone has tampered with it."

BBMP Administrator Gaurav Gupta said, "I will look into the matter. A report and records from the Bommanahalli Joint Commissioner will be obtained and the matter will be investigated."

Citizens of Bommanahalli are, however, pointed out that the engineers were not keen on clearing the encroachments.

> **I tested positive and was admitted to hospital. I am unaware of the attendance register. It looks like someone has tampered with it**
>
> Anjanappa, Assistant Executive Engineer

PRISM OF LOVE Despite the pandemic, the LGBTQIA community takes out a Pride March in Bengaluru on Sunday. | MEGHANA SASTRY

Car jumps divider, causes serial accident

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

NINE people escaped with minor injuries, after two cars toppled on Airport road near the Byatarayanapura flyover on Sunday morning.

The incident led to a chain accident, resulting in three other cars being damaged, and traffic was thrown out of gear for some time.

The accident took place at around 7.15 am when three cars were heading towards Kempegowda International Airport. A group of bikers who were riding to Nandi Hills, allegedly overtook one of those cars in a reckless manner. The car driver panicked and veered to the right, and the car jumped the divider and rammed into a speeding car which was headed towards Hebbal in the opposite direction. Two cars toppled on the opposite side, which led to the chain accident. Passersby helped in taking the injured to a private hospital.

Meanwhile, nine people, including both the cars' occupants and some bikers, escaped with minor injuries.

Nine people suffered minor injuries in a chain accident on Sunday | EXPRESS

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

28th December : Today I focus on Aquarius, a sign of infinite possibilities. If Aquarius has a god, then it is Reason, with a capital 'R'! People who are born when this sign is strong, flourish when they listen to the facts, follow the evidence and steer clear of superstition. All of us should observe these virtues today, if we are to harmonise with the current cosmic energies.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
One of your major skills is your ability to understand the broader picture, but today you should swing to the opposite extreme and examine every single detail, otherwise you're liable to overlook something vital. Perhaps a partner can show you the way forward.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Make sure you have an enjoyable day. The Moon's position suggests that what oriental sages have been saying for centuries is true: even routine and humdrum activities can be satisfying if accomplished with the right attitude. Go on - try it!

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Domestic and family responsibilities are likely to be most pressing today. Even if you're at work, the best way to complete all your responsibilities will be to generate a family atmosphere. If everyone knows their place, they'll do the best job.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Good communication seems to be awfully important, and you'll have to realise that if you don't attend to all practical complexities yourself, others are likely to step in - and get it all wrong. Take the responsibility for putting your own plans into action.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Current discussions over finances are likely to be linked to past emotional dramas, in which case it may be difficult to see the way forward. Don't act free and easy with other people's cash, by the way, because they're bound to notice sooner or later!

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
The Moon is happily ensconced in a friendly region of your chart today, so you should be able to take life as you find it. You'll be slightly more emotional than usual, and this means that you may be more compassionate to others' suffering, but also more likely to take offence.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Keep yourself to yourself if that is what you want. You may have to put on a performance in public, but what is truly important is what's happening in your sub-conscious. The decisions you take now will shape your affairs over the next four weeks.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Powerful social planets suggest that now is the time for team-work and co-operation. Don't try to go it alone for, if you do, you'll run the risk of shooting yourself in the foot. Make the most of children's enthusiasm, and do what you can to shape their energies positively.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
It's time to be ambitious, and not to be ashamed about it! It's no over-statement to say that even apparently trivial developments over the coming days and weeks could change your career direction for good, so there's no room at all for complacency.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
If you still feel confused, hurt or angry it's because recent traumas are still being stirred up by other people. However, over the next few weeks you will gradually understand that what has happened has been for the best. It's just that it might not have been what you were expecting.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
You may try to distance yourself from any colleagues who make you feel upset or angry, and concentrate on important things like boosting your income, and setting yourself up for future prosperity. It's time to look after number one - and, when you've taken care of yourself, you can think about others.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
You may decide once and for all where you would be happiest and who you'd rather be with. Only then will you be able to concentrate your energies, maximise your advantages and make life better for you and your loved ones. And if a change of job is called for, then so be it!

THE PHANTOM

HI AND LOIS

BEETLE BAILEY

BLONDIE

I'M GLAD YOU CALLED! NO, I'M NOT HAPPY WITH MY CURRENT INTERNET PROVIDER
ACTUALLY, YOU'RE MY CURRENT INTERNET PROVIDER, AND I CALL YOU EVERY DAY TO COMPLAIN ABOUT SOMETHING!
HELLO? HELLO?
CLICK

LOCKHORNS

"SIT TIGHT, LORETTA... WE BOARD AFTER THE STOWAWAYS."

DENNIS THE MENACE

"ONE EACH? WE'RE THREE TRICKSTERS WITH A GETAWAY CAR... YOU DO THE MATH."

Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

SUDOKU

				6	3			
6			1	7				9
						8	3	
	5			3	1			7
		6		2		9		
3			5	4			8	
	6	4						
5				8	6			2
			3	5				

EVIL

- Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.
- Each sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

7	9	3	4	6	8	5	1	2
5	6	4	1	7	2	9	3	8
2	8	1	3	5	9	6	4	7
9	3	6	7	2	1	4	8	5
4	7	5	8	9	6	1	2	3
1	2	8	5	4	3	7	6	9
6	1	9	2	3	7	8	5	4
3	4	7	6	8	5	2	9	1
8	5	2	9	1	4	3	7	6

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

THYLO

ATNKE

TREATO

RWANDI

We are just humbled at being part of this historic event.
It took a team to get us up there.
They don't seem to realize how famous they are.
They're so nice!
THEY HAD RETURNED, AND EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE APOLLO 11 ASTRONAUTS WERE ---

Get the free JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Monday)

Saturday's Jumbles: CLUNG HOARD SPLICE SKIING
Answer: The accountant forgot to add the last number on the page and sat there — NONPLUSSED

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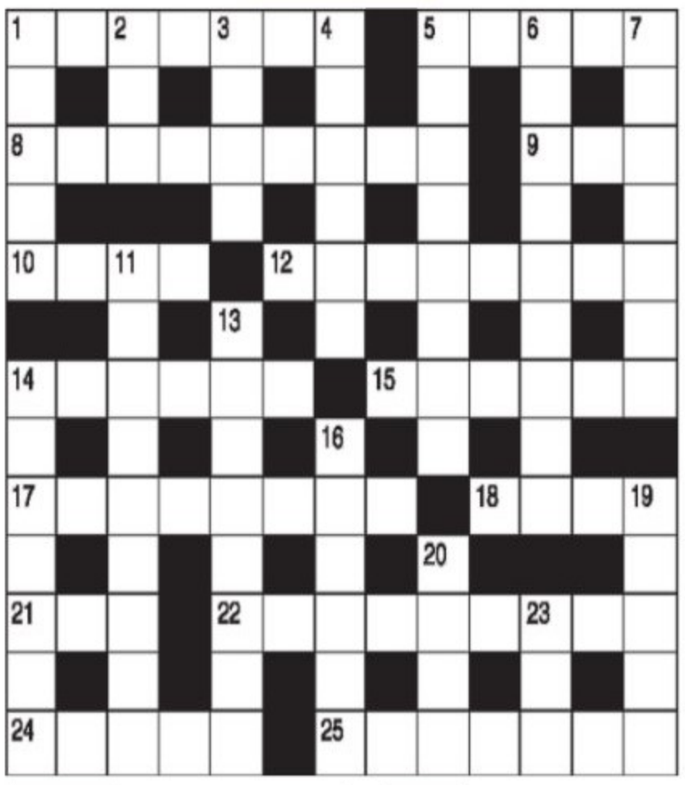
CROSS WORD



ACROSS

1 Inveigh against medical treatment (7)
5 Notes seating is provided (5)
8 Has to step out - fast! (9)
9 Large bird obtainable from the grocer (3)
10 Dog - or part of one (4)
12 What dictionaries do about it is quite clear (8)
14 Article in paper is a hoax (6)
15 Noted and objected (6)
17 Prophetic warning shout to players (8)
18 This is tied up in banknotes (4)
21 It's kept by a host of drinkers (3)
22 I'm in a race - go! (9)
24 The mate's about to move the ship (5)
25 Admitted being deceived? (5,2)

DOWN

1 Largely drank up a store of supplies (5)
2 Cut price lettuce? (3)
3 He foots the bill - and it hurts (4)
4 She'd follow me and get caught (6)
5 Precise remedy (8)
6 Agonising end of bird is prohibited (9)
7 Follow on and win (7)
11 Not knowing about one caring (9)
13 Announce that one is no longer an amateur? (8)
14 The final cases (7)
16 Beast of burden given first aid (6)
19 A number holding no end of wood (5)
20 Food course (4)
23 One article is enough for him (3)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Trespass, 5 Hero, 9 Sneer, 10 Itemise, 11 Rider Haggard, 13 Nights, 14 Albion, 17 Opening words, 20 Earache, 21 Hello, 22 Tosh, 23 Editress.

Down: 1 Test, 2 Evening, 3 Perfect pitch, 4 Slight, 6 Erica, 7 Overdone, 8 Ten-gallon hat, 12 Indolent, 15 Indulge, 16 Agreed, 18 Earns, 19 Boss.

Panel sets new guidelines for Covid-19

Technical Advisory Committee gives its recommendations to the state govt, health dept to make norms official soon

CHETANA BELAGERE @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA'S Technical Advisory Committee has recommended an S gene RT-PCR test in the wake of the new strain in UK, but it is not mandatory for all Covid positive samples.

After the National Task Force's decision on Saturday that no change was required in the treatment strategy for Covid-19, the state's TAC has recommended stringent guidelines on tackling the new strain of SARS-CoV-2.

According to sources who spoke exclusively to TNIE, the TAC has recommended an S-gene RT-PCR test for positive samples, but it is not mandatory. The S gene encodes the spike protein on the surface of SARS-CoV-2, and is also specifically targeted to detect the presence of the virus.

Sources said the committee has also suggested that institutional isolation of those who have returned from the UK be done in both government and private facilities in a separate unit, ward or room.

Also, if the report of the genome sequencing is consistent with the current SARS-CoV-2 virus genome circulating in the country the ongoing treatment protocol including home isolation/ treatment at facility level as per case severity will be followed. However, if the genomic sequencing finds the presence of the new variant of the Covid-19 virus, the patient will continue to remain in a separate isolation unit.

"It has been decided that UK returnees who tested positive will be tested on the 14th day. In case the sample is found positive on the 14th day, more samples may be taken, until two consecutive samples taken 24 hours apart test negative," a source from the health department said.

However, the clinical treatment of Covid-19 positive UK returnees both for old and new variants shall remain the same.

Also, considering that the World Health Organisation has said that the new variant found in UK might have been in many countries since September, the committee has decided to run genome sequencing test on those who returned from UK between September and November.

"It is important to know whether the new variant was already in the community since September, so random testing of some RT-PCR positive samples of UK/international returnees from September to November shall be considered for genetic sequencing for new variant," the source said.

Hampi to get mobile testing vans

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @ Ballari

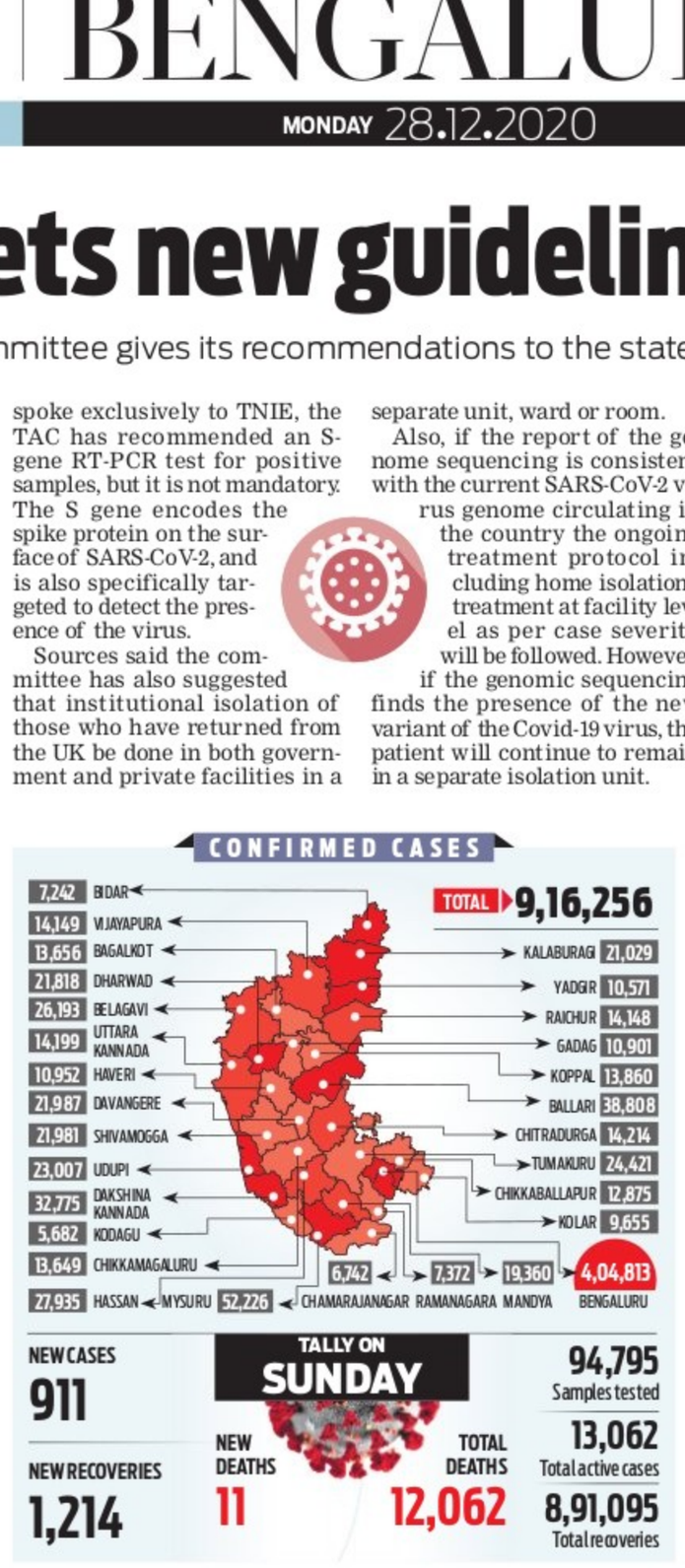
TWO mobile Covid-19 testing units and a dedicated health team will be established at world heritage site Hampi in Ballari district.

The district administration, which was already preparing for the move in anticipation of a second wave of infections, hastened the process in the wake of the new coronavirus variant.

The footfall in Hampi has gone up in the last two months, and about 2,500 tourists have been visiting Hampi everyday, and the slightly higher during the weekends.

The mobile testing units will be stationed at spots where tourist influx is higher. Health workers will conduct Rapid Antigen Tests will take the swab samples if required.

"Ballari is slowly moving towards becoming a Covid-free district, but there are still challenges. As many as 17 people have come to the district from the United Kingdom and one is still untraced. Compared to previous years, the number of foreign visitors is almost nil. A few families who have been stuck in India due to the pandemic visit the site sometimes. A meeting has been held with the administration officials and two mobile testing vans will be deployed at Hampi," said a senior health official.



Vaccination programme

In addition to frontline warriors, the Technical Advisory Committee for Covid has also decided to include high-risk individuals in the list of people who will get the first jabs when the vaccine arrives. They will be identified based on the door-to-door survey done by the state government.

Strict vigil in West zone, Mahadevapura

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

OFFICIALS from Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike and health department (BBMP) are keeping a close watch on the Covid-19 graph in Mahadevapura and Bengaluru West zones.

This is not just because of the number of cases being reported in these zones, but also due to the number of people who have come from the United Kingdom who have tested positive.

According to BBMP records, of the 14 UK returnees who tested positive, five are in Mahadevapura zone and four are in Bengaluru West. The test reports of 38 people from Mahadevapura and 26 from Bengaluru West are awaited. BBMP officials are also keeping a close watch on case reports of South Bengaluru where test reports of 91 people, which is the highest, are awaited.

A senior BBMP official said: "It has been noted in the past that suddenly there was a spike of cases in RR Nagar, Mahadevapura and West Bengaluru, when cases were starting to show stability and a decline in other places. So to ensure that there no untoward cases, especially of the new strains, we are keeping a watch on the rising numbers and those with symptoms."

"People in these areas in close proximity and since these wards are on the city outskirts, those travelling from other districts and states in their personalised transport vehicles are also high. We have decided to set up facilities like community centres for testing and isolation. The question of finding places where information can be disseminated and testing can be done is being discussed. It has been decided to give special attention to the 110 villages and CMC and TMC areas," the BBMP official added.

The zonal BBMP and health department officials are interacting with resident welfare associations to take stock of the situation and make preparations also. The official added that earlier, many suggestions and opinions were given by residents, which will also be looked into now.

Genome sequencing will help determine testing accuracy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"GENOMIC surveillance should have a particular number of samples drawn from a calculated section of the population, from different areas, at a chosen interval of time. For instance, 100 samples can be collected from each district of a state every month, like how it was planned in Kerala, the only state which had chalked out a plan for it," Dr Scaria noted.

He said that such an effort should be made nationwide or at least statewide, as it will help in identifying strains, determine the accuracy of testing methods and more importantly, help in the efficacy of vaccine and treatment methods. Such a study will also help pinpoint the source of an outbreak, including the time it occurred and its location. Thereby, restrictions on movement, like a lockdown, can be imposed locally.

Dr Rakesh K Mishra, Director of CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB) said that while India has done genomic sequencing for approximately 4,500 Covid-19 samples since April alone, it is minimal. The UK, on the other hand, was able to detect the variant of the Covid virus because they were closely monitoring it from the beginning.

"Early on, India had not even framed guidelines for sequencing. Labs here were conducting sequencing based on their resources. India had also restricted import of reagents for sequencing," he explained.

Talking about the benefits of systematic genomic sequencing, both from an epidemiological and public health perspective, Dr Mishra said, "This will help us determine which Covid virus variant is dominant. If, for instance, 10-30% of the population in a city is infected with one particular strain which is more infectious, and another city has not been infected by this variant, movement between these two cities can be restricted. Sequencing will help us identify variants."

Dr P V Ravindra, who is handling the sequencing and testing activities at CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysuru, said that such efforts are necessary if we have to live with the virus. "Systematic efforts in sequencing will help us pinpoint mutations that make the virus less contagious or less virulent, which serve as building blocks in developing vaccines and methods to improve testing efficacy," he pointed out.

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KOSAMATTAM FINANCE LTD.
Head Office: M.K.C Building, Market Junction, M.L.Road, Kottayam. PIN-686001
GOLD AUCTION NOTICE
The pledgees in specific and the public, in general, are hereby notified that public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the below accounts is proposed to be conducted on following dates. The gold ornaments being Auctioned have been pledged by various borrowers who have failed to close the loan accounts and redeem the pledged gold ornaments despite being notified by letters sent by registered post. The lists of pledged gold ornaments taken up for auction have also been displayed at the respective branches. Please note that the items remaining unauctioned shall be auctioned on any other date with out further notice. Changes if any, in the venue and date of auction shall be displayed at the venue on the date of auction mentioned below and no further notice regarding the change of date and time shall be issued.
Important Notice: The last date to redeem/release the Gold Loan Ornaments for the customers in the auction list will be 07.01.2021
CHIKKABALLAPUR DISTRICT & TALUK : Venue: Kosamattam Finance Ltd, Bhavani" Near Vani Talkies, Above Sangeetha Mobiles, BB Road, Chikballapur- 562101, Date: 08.01.2021, Time: 10.00 AM
List of pledges : CHIKKABALLAPUR : 6072 6231 6284 6442 6532 6535 6560 6597 6598 6600 6612 6620 6652 6666 6672 6687 6688 6694 6695 6738 6763 6920 6921 6960 6964 6972 6988 7003 7008 7029 7030 7041 7042 7062 7066 7079 7080 7130 7154 7160 7169 GAURIBIDANUR : 4628 7235 7426 SIDLAGHATTA: 7563 8252 8277 8320 8434 8576 8612 8622 8623 8638
DEVANAHALLI TALUK: Venue: Kosamattam Finance Ltd, MAM COMPLEX, OPP. MINI. VIDHAN SOUDHA, DEVANAHALLI, BANGALORE-562110 PH:080-27682111 Date: 08.01.2021, Time: 12.30 PM
List of pledges : DEVANAHALLI : 6782 6849 6939 7025 7058 7060 7166 7188 7191 7197 7203 7208 7227 7232 7277 VIJAYAPURA: 8099 9168 9193 9228 9405 9495 9640 9656 9758 9840 9841 9887 9949 9950 9957 10012 10015 10095
BANGALORE NORTH TALUK : Venue:Kosamattam Finance Ltd, Rssegional office, No.33/3,1st floor, Above little square, M.V.R Building, Near Indian Academy, Hennur, Bangalore-560043. Date: 08.01.2021, Time: 02.00 PM
List of pledges : BABUSAPALYA: 18545 18602 18783 19153 19154 19155 19252 19253 19254 19273 19429 19466 19519 19538 19578 19603 COX TOWN: 12651 12843 13010 13379 13423 13878 13915 HENNUR: 6729 6839 6856 6861 6997 7018 7024 7076 7119 7136 7159 7180 7192 7206 7224 7226 7227 7233 7234 7235 7236 7237 HORAMAVU: 15222 16620 16874 17008 17120 17223 17224 17225 17226 17271 17343 17364 17365 17389 17403 17453 17485 17504 17506 17518 17524 17525 17526 17527 17528 KAGADASAPURA: 5122 5470 5471 5472 5473 5474 5565 5595 5604 KAMMAGONDANAHALLI: 10087 10532 10587 10711 10718 10755 10786 10826 10861 10925 10935 10936 10939 10960 10961 10962 10977 10978 10979 10980 10981 11032 11033 11034 11050 11071 11098 11121 11125 11130 11144 11145 11157 11159 11175 11176 11194 11195 11196 11201 11202 11229 11234 11236 11237 11238 11239 11240 11241 11242 11245 11286 11289 11306 KAMMANAHALLI: 17326 17327 17388 17445 17572 17691 17693 17696 17738 17750 17751 17752 17930 18119 18148 18181 18212 18214 18215 18226 18239 18249 18250 18266 18267 18270 18271 18286 18330 18332 18350 KAMARAJ ROAD: 10203 11748 11828 11831 11832 11833 11834 11835 11836 11837 11838 11839 11840 11841 11847 11848 11849 11850 11851 KARIYANAPALYA:11256 11857 12625 12633 12727 12734 12739 12790 12833 12837 12877 12950 12951 13000 13082 13109 13128 13129 13130 13184 13235 13237 13251 13252 KATTIGENAHALLI : 3024 3025 3081 3087 3271 3293 3387 3411 3441 3456 3457 3469 3476 3479 3480 3481 3518 MATHIKERE: 8375 9491 9541 9664 9665 9789 10117 10118 10132 10133 10172 10204 10223 10225 10244 10291 10297 10300 10329 10348 10349 10383 10384 10395 10396 10398 10399 10405 10406 10407 10408 10417 10423 10426 10427 10428 10429 10430 10432 10433 10434 10435 10436 10437 10438 10439 10440 10448 10452 10455 10456 10457 10459 10464 10476 10483 10484 10485
MANORAYANNAPALYA : 1854 1896 1985 2121 2215 2236 2237 2275 2281 2323 2326 2328 2339 2340 NELAMANGALA: 6363 6683 6750 6790 6872 6921 6923 6924 6944 6961 6969 6985 6994 7003 7015 7016 7025 7027 7028 7061 7070 7071 7072 7074 7078 7079 7083 7092 7101 7103 7104 7105 7111 7120 7121 7122 7123 7128 7134 RAJAJI NAGAR II : 8066 8300 8301 8306 SUBBANNAPALYA: 7550 9003 9219 9280 9315 9411 9475 9530 9793 SULTHANPALYA: 17046 17074 17387 17397 17459 17460 17518 17754 17779 17788 17860 17861 17862 17863 17877 17878 17920 17956 17957 17962 17963 17964 17973 17982 17983 17984 18002 18003 18049 18060 THIPPASANDRA: 7271 7664 7678 7757 7758 7842 7843 UDAYANAGAR: 2219 2298 2299 2384 2414 2424 2425 2435 2437 2438 2439 2441 2444 2445 2462 2463 2464 2465 2466 2467 2475 2480 2487 2492 2495 2499 2501 2502 2507 2510 YELAHANKA : 1916 1967 1972 2041 2120 2148 2189 2198 2199 2200 2211 2240 2243 2249 2257 2258 2259 2273
BANGALORE EAST TALUK : Venue:Kosamattam Finance Ltd, No.1,Papanna Building, 1st Floor, Near Eltra Company Old Madras Road Avalahalli, Virgo Nagar (POST) Bidrahalli Bangalore- 560049 Date: 09.01.2021, Time: 10.00 AM
List of pledges : AKSHAYA NAGAR : 14415 14448 14485 14491 14492 14522 14532 14533 14534 14544 14569 14617 14633 14707 14717 14718 14722 14723 14724 14745 14746 14750 14772 14779 14809 14810 14838 14842 14843 14856 14857 14863 14865 14869 14878 14879 AVALAHALLI: 18784 19748 19795 19928 20862 20948 20974 21073 21193 21194 21195 21200 21201 21432 21457 21499 21533 21602
AYYAPPA NAGAR : 13111 13147 13396 13455 13798 14003 14105 14106 14107 14108 14229 14232 14233 14248 14302 BHATTARAHALLI: 15118 15876 16614 17266 17334 17335 17400 17420 17421 17424 17445 17459 17473 17474 17511 17512 17513 17514 17515 17517 17573 17608 17629 17632 17638 HOSKOTE: 14091 14877 14878 15069 15080 15083 15106 15125 15126 15177 15226 15227 15258 15326 15338 15339 15346 15351 15357 15394 15424 15428 15433 15446 15455 15464 15466 15474 15483 15493 15503 15514 15542 15548 TC PALYA: 11693 11849 11893 11966 11974 11990 12002 12070 12081 12248 12249 12259 12272 12280 12310 12311 12312 12313 12314 12320 12326
ANEKAL TALUK : Venue:Kosamattam Finance Ltd, C K R Complex,Near Ksrtc Bus Stand, Anekal, Bangalore- 562106 Date: 09.01.2021 , Time: 2.00 PM
List of pledges : ANEKAL : 19257 19759 20038 20474 20479 20501 20737 20775 20957 20986 21018 21294 21304 21624 21668 21716 21823 21824 22111 22112 22113 22607 22608 22614 22632 22658 22673 22675 22685 22686 22759 22786 22814 22844 22876 22877 22878 22879 22880 22916 22923 22931 22933 22941 22942 22943 22951 22961 ATTIBELE: 5236 5365 5470 5513 5589 5591 5592 5593 5594 5796 5816 5839 5940 5948 5954 CHANDAPURA : 9136 9139 9248 9359 9636 9800 9977 9978 9979 9980 9981 9982 10105 10128 10157 10164 10165 10169 10203 10206 10212 10213 10214 10228 10232 10245 10246 10251 10252 10253 10257 10264 10266 10267 10274 10278
BANGALORE SOUTH TALUK : Venue:Kosamattam Finance Ltd, No :2, SM Complex, Hosur Main Road, Madiwala, Bangalore-560068 Date: 11.01.2021, Time: 10.00 AM
List of pledges : BOMMANAHALLI : 12757 13434 13675 14047 14060 14717 14907 14922 14937 14938 14946 14954 14964 14982 14983 15011 15019 15028 15057 15088 15099 15100 15117 15130 15137 15146 15151 15152 15153 15154 15155 15156 15157 15158 15164 15165 15200 15218 15279 15293 15334 15360 15378 15388 15390 15417 15419 15429 15442 15444 15468 15473 15479 15480 KASAVANAHALLI : 12105 12375 12476 12603 12732 12759 12767 12770 12775 12777 12778 12793 12815 12859 12936 12948 12949 12958 12959 12986 12987 13034 13049 13050 13054 13055 13092 13107 13114 13143 13144 13150 13154 13155 13156 13159 13160 13164 13195 13213 13232 13239 13242 13243 13244 13248 KONANAKUNTE: 4933 5080 5164 5171 5230 5231 5232 5233 5234 5235 5236 5340 5344 5407 5413 5415 5416 5417 5442 5450 5462 5465 5469 MADIWALA : 8873 8878 8888 8898 8899 8912 8913 8914 8915 8916 8917 8922 8923 8924 8925 8926 8927 8928 8929 8930 8931 8932 8933 8935 8936 8937 8938 8939 8941 8942 8943 8944 8945 8946 8947 8949 8950 8952 8953 8955 8956 8959 8961 8970 8987 8988 8989 8990 8991 8992 8993 8994 8995 8996 8997 8998 8999 9000 9001 9002 9003 9004 9005 9007 9008 9009 9010 9015 9016 9017 9018 9019 9020 9021 9022 9023 9024 9025 9026 9027 9028 9029 9030 9038 9041 9045 9046 9047 9052 WILSON GARDEN: 7998 8008 8552 8604 8606 8607 8608 8799 MARUTHI NAGAR: 9102 9277 9316 9556 9670 9683 9687 9729 9740 9742 9744 9782 9783 9797 9830 9839 9845 9846 9895 9907 9908 9910 9931 9933 9934 9938 10030 10103 10107 10108 10109 10136 10151 10153 10154 10155 10159 10160 10161 10162 10163 10164 10166 10194
TUMKUR DISTRICT & TALUK: Venue:Kosamattam Finance Ltd, Haripriya Heights 1st floor Opp Hemavathi Office Near Essra Wedding Hall Kunigal Main Road Sadashiva Nagar Tumkur 572101 Ph: 08162200608 Date: 11.01.2021 at 2.00 PM
List of pledges : TUMKUR : 3351 5320 5634 5655 5940 6012 6022 6040 6041 6049 6053 6055 6056 6062 6064 6068 6069 6070 6073 6074 6083 6097 6098 6102 6103 6109 6119 6131 6178 6179 6216 6226 6247 6257 6262 6269 6271 6293 6315 6326 6327 6328 6329 6330 6342 6347 6414 6417 6440 6468 6477 6478 6480 6481 6482 6483 6490 6492 6494 6495 6505 6506 6514 6524 6528 6559 6564 6583 6597 6611 6614 6619 6620 6621 6622 6627 6632 6637 6641 6651 6652 6656 6657 6658
Bidders who are interested to participate in the above auction shall comply with the following:
1. Submit an Earnest Money Deposit of Rs.1,00,000(One Lakh Rupees Only) by way of NEFT. The same shall be returned to the unsuccessful bidders on the same day.
2. In the event of failure to remit the said amounts, the amounts paid till date including EMD shall be forfeited by the company without any notice and the auctioned gold shall be again put for auction without any further notice. Changes if any, regarding the venue and date of auction shall be displayed at the venue on the date of auction mentioned above and on the company website and no further notice regarding the change of date and venue shall be issued.
3. Allowing participation in the auction and the acceptance of bids shall be at the sole discretion of the company. For further details and terms & conditions please contact on 080-41109310 / 372 during office hours on or before auction dates mentioned above.
Kosamattam Finance Ltd.
Kottayam

ANDHRA PRADESH TECHNOLOGY SERVICES LTD.
3rd Floor, R&B Building, Opp. Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium, MG Road, Labbipet, Vijayawada-520010, Ph.0866-2468108 | https://www.apts.gov.in
STOPPAGE OF APTS TENDER NOTIFICATIONS IN NEWS PAPERS-Reg.
It is to inform that from 01-01-2021 onwards APTS Tender Notifications will not be published in News Papers. All APTS Tender Notifications will be available with APTS Tender webpage i.e., https://apts.gov.in/tenders.aspx and also on https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in/login.html.
Sd/- Managing Director, APTSL

DEMAND NOTICE
Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act.) read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (the said Rules). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the said Rules, the Authorised Officer of IIFL Home Finance Ltd.(IIFL HFL) (Formerly known as India India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd.) has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the Borrower(s) to pay within 60 days from the publication of this notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest from the date(s) of Demand Notice till the date of payment. The detail of the Borrower(s), amount due as on date of Demand Notice and security offered towards repayment of loan amount are as under:-

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
Mr. Sharifuddin, S N B Enterprises, Mrs.Sabru Nisha (Prospect No. 841313 & 847924)	22-Dec-20 For Rs. 42,99,472.00/-(Rupees Forty Two Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Four Hundred Seventy Two Only) Prospect no. 841313 and Rs. 5,28,137.00/-(Rupees Five Lakh Twenty Eight Thousand One Hundred Thirty Seven Only) Prospect no. 847924	all that piece and parcel of the property being : Flat No.211, First Floor Fern Blue Bells, Sy No.53/1,6Th Cross, Saraswathi Layout, Parappana, Agrahara, Naganthapura,Begur, Opp Road To Gate No.1,Robert Bosch, Bangalore, 560100, Karnataka,India

If the said Borrowers fail to make payment to IIF HFL as aforesaid, IIFL HFL may proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the said Act, and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks, costs and consequences of the Borrowers.
For, further details please contact to Authorised Officer at Branch Office : IIFL HFL "ADAM CHAMBERS," #11, Richmond Road, Bengaluru - 560025/or Corporate Office : IIFL Tower, Plot No. 98, Udyog Vihar, Ph-IV Gurgaon, Haryana. Place: Bangalore Date: 28.12.2020 Sd/- Authorised Officer, For IIFL Home Finance Ltd

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PUBLIC NOTICE
To, SRI. DEVRAJ, S/o Sri. Basavarajappa,Aged about 43 years, residing at No.844/8,2nd Bus Stop, Vidya Nagar, Davanagere-577 005.
Under the instructions of my client;Sri. Mohan Kumar, S/o Sri. Hanumanth Rayappa, aged about 33 years, residing at No.173, Vishweshwarapura, Nelamangala, Bangalore-562 123 and Sri. Suresh Murthy, S/o Kambaiah Gowda, aged about 39 years, residing at No. 413, 42nd Cross, 4th Block, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-560 010, please take notice as follows
Our clients instruct that the first of our client is the Proprietor of M/s Vignesh Entertainer, having Office at No.55, Pavanakrupa, 2nd Main, 3rd Stage, Vinayaka Layout, Vijayanagar, Bengalore-560 040. Our client has also registered their banner in the name and style M/s Vignesh Entertainer before the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce, Crescent Road, High Grounds, Bengalore-560 001 under the Producer category vide membership No. H-385/2960.
Our clients further instructs that our clients intended to produce a Kannada feature film "FLY" under their banner M/s Vignesh Entertainer and the production was under progress. You have also registered your banner under the name and style "Bilwa Creations"before the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce, Crescent Road, High Grounds, Bengalore-560 001.
Our client instructs that our client was running storage of funds for the further production of their feature film "FLY" in order to complete the shooting, post production, marketing and in order to release the aforesaid movie. You have agreed to provide financial assistance to our clients on profit sharing basis and you have agreed to finance a sum of Rs.80,00,000/- (Rupees Eight Lakhs Only) as joint producer. Accordingly our clients along with you have entered into a agreement dated 28.04.2017 in order to facilitates you to finance our client for purpose of completion of the feature film "FLY" .
Our client also instructs that our clients along with you have also opened a joint account in Vijaya Bank, Rajajinagar Branch, Banglaore vide Account. No. 117901011004555, you have transferred a sum of Rs.19,60,000/- (Rupees Nineteen Lakhs Sixty Thousand Only) to the aforesaid account and apart from that you have also spent a sum of Rs.6,00,000/- (Rupees Six Lakhs Only) towards the shooting by way of cash, to which our clients acknowledges the receipt of the same.
Our client also instructs that, when you have failed to perform your part of the contract as agreed under the agreement dated 28.04.2017 by further lending money to the project, you have showed no interest in order to finance further to complete the feature film "FLY", on mutual discussion, our client along with you have terminated the agreement dated 28.04.2017 by executing the agreement dated 07.07.2017 with certain terms and condition agreed upon by both of you mutually.
Our clients further instructs that you have agreed to give up your right, title and interest in respect of the aforesaidfeature film "FLY" for a sum of Rs.25,60,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakhs Sixty Thousand Only) along with simple interest at 15% Per annum.
Our client also instructs that before releasing the aforesaid feature film "FLY" our clients are liable to pay the aforesaid amount of Rs.25,60,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakhs Sixty Thousand Only) along with simple interest at 15% Per annum.
Thus being the case, our clients are not in a position to complete the project and release the feature film "FLY" within a reasonable period. Now the entire project has become stand still from last three years. The agreement dated 07.07.2017 has expired by efflux of time and is not legally binding on our client to act upon the terms and condition of the contract.
Our clients also instructs that in order to complete the project and release the same to its logical end our clients are in need of further financial assistance of Rs.35,00,000/- (Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs Only) towards the post production. Our clients have invested their hard earned money on the aforesaid project and they are under financial crises. Hence they are trying to sell the entire project to intending third party purchaser on the terms and condition. The legal notice dated 19.10.2020 was send to you by R.P.A.D, the same is returned with Postal Shara Door Locked. Hence this public notice.
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, you are hereby called upon to communicate our clients within seven days from the date of receipt of this notice in order to fulfill the obligation of the agreement dated 07.07.2017 and also in order to sell the entire project to the third party intending purchase. Otherwise our clients have no other option to intimate the same to the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce, Crescent Road, High Grounds, Bengalore-560 001, terminate the agreement dated 07.07.2017 with immediate effect and work out their remedy with the third party intending purchaser, at your risk and cost.
B.C. CHETHAN
M/s LEXFIRM, Advocates & Solicitors
Place: - Bangalore
Date: - 12.11.2020
No. 35/1, Ground Floor, 3rd Cross, 3rd Main, Near Vasavi Temple, Chamarajpet, Bengaluru-560 018. PH: - 080-26624985

THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-1 AT BANGALORE
Jeevan Mangal Building, No.4, Residency Road, Bengaluru- 560 025.
O.A.No.358/2019
Between:
Bank of India, Yeshwanthpur SME Branch, Yeshwanthpur Industrial Suburb Bangalore-560 022. ...Applicant
And:
Sri.Murali Gowda ...Defendant
Summons issued under Rule 23 (viii) of The Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules 1993 By way of Paper Publication
To,
Defendant
Sri.Murali Gowda, S/o.Sri. Prakash Gowda, Residing at: Flat No. 506, 5th Floor, Purva Highland Apartments, Mallasandra off Kanakapura Main Road, Bangalore - 560 062
Under Section 19 of The Recovery of Debts Due To Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993, against the Defendants for Recovery of a sum of Rs.1,29,35,675.23 P.s (Rupees One Crore Twenty Nine Lakhs Thirty Five Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy Five and Twenty Three Paisa Only) together with current and future interest and for other reliefs.
The above mentioned defendants are required to appear before this Tribunal in person or through an Advocate, in support of their defense to show cause on 26/03/2021 at 10.30 a.m as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determine in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the Ninth Day of November, 2020.
By order of the Tribunal
Sd/-Registrar,
Debts Recovery Tribunal - I, Bengaluru

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A 45-year-old Gram Panchayat poll candidate from Sullia taluk in Dakshina Kannada district was arrested a day before the second phase the elections on charges of raping a minor girl, who is related to him

CRUCIAL NOD

Cabinet may take up cow slaughter Bill today

BANSY KALAPPA
@Bengaluru

THE state cabinet is expected to take up the controversial Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill 2020 for approval on Monday.

To ease Bengaluru traffic, the Cabinet ministers may give the nod to the advanced traffic information and management system using the Japanese government grant.

The other agenda on the list includes the approval for a brand new emergency response system which will be set up at a cost of Rs 35 crore, and the premier BR Ambedkar School of Economics University, which has been delayed raising concerns of academicians. The setting up of University of Horticultural Sciences too may come up for discussion.

The cabinet is likely to sanction Rs 150 crore to pump 430 million litres of treated sewage water a day from KR Puram, Medahalli and Kadugodi-Whitefield areas to fill up 38 tanks in Hoskote, on the outskirts of Bengaluru.

It is expected to take up the issue of greening Nandi Hills and Kemmangundi to make them more picturesque to boost tourism. The hills will be handed over to the Horticulture Department to grow more trees.

The cabinet may approve tightened laws relating to cash transportation under the Karnataka Private Security Agencies Rules 2020. After many cyber crimes, it is expected to take up and approve setting up of a state-of-the-art cyber-forensic laboratories throughout the state under the smart policing project.

The issue of appointment of Chairman of State Medical Supplies Corporation after a series of serious allegations about medical supplies too is likely to come up.

Council adjournment likely to be discussed

The state cabinet is likely to discuss the untimely adjournment of the Legislative Council by Chairman Prathapchandra Shetty that led to ugly scenes on the floor of the House

2nd phase panchayat polls record 80.71%

Bengaluru Rural notches highest at 91.86%, B'luru Urban lowest at 67.48%; BJP expected to get a clear edge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

AS THE second and final phase of Gram Panchayat elections concluded on Sunday, the State Election Commission said that the overall poll percentage was 80.71, a tad lower than the 81.4 recorded during the first phase on December 22. Bengaluru Rural had the highest voter turnout at 91.86 per cent, and quite ironically, Bengaluru Urban recorded the lowest at 67.48 per cent.

All the three major political parties claimed to have done well. But with no parties and party symbols allowed in these polls, it is common practice to make such exaggerated claims. With the polling over, all eyes are now on Wednesday, when the votes will be counted.

At all the 20,000-plus polling booths, the SEC followed Covid-related guidelines, like handsanitisers, masks and social distancing.

Over one lakh candidates were in fray for 39,378 seats spread across 109 taluks. Those diagnosed Covid-positive were allowed to vote in the last one hour of polling between 4 pm and 5 pm.

In round one, the polling was held for 3,019 panchayats with 43,238 seats across 117 taluks. An assessment by the State Government gave around 18,000 seats to BJP, 16,000 seats to the Congress and 4,000-plus to the JDS, while the remaining to independents and others.

An elderly woman comes out of a polling booth after casting her vote in the second phase of the Gram Panchayat polls, in Banjarapalya, Bengaluru, on Sunday | SHRIRAM BN

DGP Praveen Sood told *The New Indian Express* that the polling was completely peaceful like in the first round and a record of around 79,000 police personnel, home guards and auxiliary forces had been pressed into service. For the first time, personnel from the prisons department were used in large numbers, he added. Each booth had an average of two police personnel.

Gram Panchayat polls form the grassroots of the electoral system.

Though traditionally, Congress and JDS were strong in Gram Panchayats, the BJP has been steadily growing over the last 12 years. It is a common phenomenon in these polls for all the members to gravitate towards the winners as the political party system is not followed.

The assessment of phase two may take a couple of days, but the BJP is expected to get a clear edge. Since there was no contest in 3,697 seats, the members have been elected unopposed.

> **The polling was completely peaceful like in the first round and a record of around 79,000 police personnel, home guards and auxiliary forces were pressed into service**
>
> DGP Praveen Sood

All for votes: Candidates ferry migrants

MAHESH M GOUDAR @Bagalkot

ON Sunday morning, the bus stands in Badami, Hunagund and Guledagudda were crowded with thousands of migrants. They were undoubtedly returning home, but for a very different reason. They were boarding the buses to go to their villages to cast their precious vote in the Gram Panchayat elections.

With an aim to register victory in the elections, many contestants spent from their own pockets to ferry the migrants from Bengaluru, Mangaluru and cities of Maharashtra and Goa. This shows how the once low-key grassroots elections have today assumed significance. The candidates also arranged for taxis and cars from the taluk bus stand to ferry the migrants to the villages and then to polling stations.

Subash R, 43, a resident of Thimasagara village of Guledagudda and working at a port in Mangaluru, said, "One of the candidates spoke to us and had arranged a luxury air-conditioned bus for about 60 people of the same village, all working Mangaluru."

However, in a few villages in Bagalkot and Hungund taluks, the migrants failed to turn up, affecting the overall voting percentage.

EXPRESS READ

Academics, writers discuss future of BJP

Bengaluru: A group of thought leaders and intellectuals gathered at a hotel in Bengaluru on Saturday for a discussion on taking the BJP forward, beyond the 2023 elections. About two dozen intellectuals, mostly writers, academics and thinkers, were handpicked more than a week ago by a senior BJP leader based in New Delhi. They gathered at about 6pm and discussed the issues for about 2-3 hours before breaking for dinner. The group observed with concern the government's negative image, and how to deal with the issues on hand. They also discussed the party's exaggerated dependence on some persons to win elections in Karnataka, and how to make the party more relevant in the coming years. **ENS**

WILL NOT BACK DOWN

People from the Sikh community in Bengaluru came together to stage a protest against the Central Government's farm bills on Sunday | MEGHANA SASTRY

I never prevented Kharge from becoming CM: Siddu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

OPPOSITION leader Siddaramaiah on Sunday tried to come out clean, saying he did not prevent senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge from becoming the chief minister, and challenged JDS supremo H D Deve Gowda to reveal the names of leaders who stopped Kharge in his tracks.

After casting his vote in the second phase of Gram Panchayat elections at his village Siddaramanahundi near Mysuru, Siddaramaiah said, "If Gowda knows who blocked Kharge then he should reveal the name."

Gowda on Saturday had said that several Congress leaders had prevented Kharge from becoming the chief minister, but refused to name anyone.

Siddaramaiah, accusing the RSS of conspiring to divide the Kurubas, asked what was the need for a struggle and a movement demanding the Scheduled Tribe tag for the community when the BJP is in power both at the Centre and State.

Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah has lunch at his friend's house, in Siddaramanahundi, Mysuru, on Sunday | UDAYSHANKAR S

"During my tenure as chief minister, I had recommended an ethnographic study of the Kuruba community. Both Eshwarappa and Vishwanath are in BJP now and they can get the ethnographic study done and get it approved from both the State and Centre," he said.

After casting his vote, Siddaramaiah spent some time at the residence of his childhood friend Kempeeraiah, where he had lunch along with Congress leaders including Brijesh Kalappa, Mysuru District Congress Committee president Vijay Kumar and others.

Conversing with a young boy, Siddarth, Siddaramaiah asked whether he was studying in Kannada or English medium and the boy replied English. To which Siddaramiah said, "I did my schooling in Kannada medium and became a CM. Those who study English will not become great." He then went on to give a lecture on Kannada.

AIMIM eyes Bengaluru, to contest Palike polls

MG CHETAN @Bengaluru

EVEN as BBMP elections are caught in a legal tangle, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM), headed by Asaduddin Owaisi, is making ground-level preparations for the local body elections.

The party, which is expanding its base across the country, is said to be scouting for candidates for the polls. Though it may not field candidates in all the 198 BBMP wards, it is learnt that the party is looking for workers who have a strong base in certain wards.

AIMIM State General Secretary Latif Khan Pathan said, "We had planned to contest the BBMP elections earlier, but the Siddaramaiah government had stopped us by using various tactics. Despite that, an SDPI candidate, who was earlier with us, won the election. But this time, we are preparing in advance."

He said that they have created ward-wise committees to strengthen the party at the grassroots. "We prefer workers who have done good work for the people. The committees will identify such candidates and a final decision will be taken by the party leaders. We are also keen on giving tickets to youngsters," he added.

Khan said, "The party will not contest all the seats. We have a practical approach and know that we cannot be the ruling party as soon as we begin. We will give priority to only those who are eligible and will not field anyone who does not make the mark. We are also holding discussions on bringing out a manifesto this time."

The party has already conducted a recce of North Karnataka and is planning one in the southern parts of the state to strengthen the party.

GIVING A BOOST

'Skills on Wheels' to hit village roads, aid youth

CHETANA BELAGERE
@Bengaluru

WITH Covid-19 leaving many youngsters in rural areas unemployed, the Karnataka State Skill Development Corporation is set to launch 'Skills on Wheels', to give them a leg-up. Buses will go to every taluk in the districts and training will be imparted to youngsters in the 18-35 age group.

"This idea was initiated by the skill development department of Karnataka, and will be launched in the first week of January," explained Ashwin Gowda, MD, Karnataka Skill Development Corporation. Deputy Chief Minister Dr C N Ashwath Narayan is the guiding force behind this initiative, he said. "Our government is focused on imparting industry-relevant skill training for youngsters to provide them a better livelihood," said the DyCM.

As a pilot project, the department plans to impart 'general electrician' and 'beauty therapist' training in eight districts, from January.

The reason for taking this initiative to villages is to reach every last youngster, as vocational training under CM Koushalya Vikasa Yojana happens at the district headquarters, and not at the taluk level or villages. "There may be many youngsters who find it difficult to leave their fields, or women who are not sent out of home, and reach the district headquarters. So we decided to take it to their doorstep," explained Gowda.

A survey was done to know which are the preferred courses, and 'general electrician' came up tops as it means they can repair agricultural machines, carry out minor electrical works, instal DTH cables, repair daily use devices etc, which is much needed in villages. Among women, the demand was for 'beautician', Gowda said.

The State government has chosen eight districts for the pilot project, including Mysuru, Bengaluru, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Yadgir, Belagavi, Shivamogga and Ramanagara. The training will be for about 240 hours, with six hours every day. While the age group for the programme is 18-35 years, the basic education for general electrician course is ITI training or Class 10, and for beauty therapist, it is Class 10 or at least high school.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The idea of presence lost quite a bit of its value

Being Present

THESE practices that have defined the year 2020 raise many important philosophical questions. One of the most important is the meaning of being physically present. What does physical presence add to an event? Is physical presence even necessary in a world dictated by increasing online activities? We are now in 'touch' with our family, our teachers, our doctors and almost everybody else through the online medium. What do we lose if we don't meet them physically at all?

This is not a new philosophical question. The difference between imagination and reality has always had to engage with the difference between presence and absence. It has also been an extremely important problem in art. Theatre is different from films in that there is a physical presence of the actors in front of the audience. Is there a difference in watching the actors in front of us and watching a film of that play? Many artists in the performing arts believe that what makes their performance special is their 'presence' on the stage.

In this year of the pandemic, the idea of presence lost quite a bit of its value and has been overshadowed by the Zoom phenomenon. If what has happened this year is a clue, then what I glimpse for the future is a human civilisation which will replace most, if not all, physical interactions with digital interactions. Pandemics will only be another excuse to make this change complete.

Consequence

There is a consequence to this disembodied engagement with others, when we mortgage the physical body to the online world. In so doing, we become insensitive to the multidimensionality of others since we only experience others through technology. The person we see on Skype or Zoom is not a physical person but only an image that is mediated by that technology. This is not an experience of the other but only a technological experience of the other.

Such experiences have a tendency to make one insensitive to the suffering of others since suffering is a shared feeling. The shift to this online existence will only increase the disparity in society. It is not an accident that this was also the year in which the poor became more poorer and the global economy pushed tens of millions into dire poverty.

The online world is rich in information and we come to know so many things which is not otherwise possible. But human relationships are not about information alone. They need the element of being with each other and that comes only through physical presence.

A culture based on absence, as in the online world, is politically dangerous. Teaching online is a practice that is based on absence and this has had disastrous consequences for poor children. The online world is a distant world, controlled by powers we don't see. They are hidden and unaccountable. The greatest danger of this is when governments become an online entity. They govern through this medium, they remain hidden and there is nobody 'physical' that we can hold accountable.

(Sundar Sarukkai is the Founder of Barefoot Philosophers, an initiative to take philosophy to children and the public)

KCR SOFTENS STAND ON CENTRE'S NEW AGRI LAWS

Telangana CM rolls back village-level procurement citing new acts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hyderabad

TELANGANA Chief Minister and TRS president K Chandrashekar Rao seems to have softened his stand on the BJP-led central government's new agriculture laws.

Telangana government on Sunday decided to roll back its regular practice of village-level procurement of paddy and other crops, in recognition of the central government's new agriculture laws which allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country they wish to for a better price.

It may be mentioned here that just in the start of this month, Telangana CM had expressed his support to the farmers agitating against the BJP government's agriculture laws and even asked the TRS workers to make the Bharat Bandh against farm laws on December 8 successful.

Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao's PRO V Jwala Narasimha Rao presents a self-authored book to the CM, in Hyderabad on Sunday | EXPRESS

The decision to roll back the village-level procurement of farm produce is being viewed in the background of Rao's visit to Delhi on December 13 where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. This was after the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation polls in which BJP made big gains.

While procurement at villages has been rolled back, the state government has stressed that Agriculture Market Committees must function properly and suggested farmers not to get their produce in a phased manner to the markets.

The state government has also withdrawn another of its major policies concerning agriculture - of regulated cropping system and has decided to leave the choice to farmers as to what crop they should cultivate.

These decisions were taken by the CM at a meeting participated by various ministers and senior agriculture department officials that took place at Pragathi Bhavan. The Telangana government in its press statement following the meeting at Pragathi Bhavan said that it is not viable to continue the procurement at villages. It said that as the new agriculture laws allow the farmers to sell their crop anywhere, the state government need not set up purchasing centers in villages.

TAKE A BREAK, HAVE A BANANA

Two artistes, dressed as Lord Hanuman, take a break from their performance on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti, outside Pathala Anjaneya Temple in Bengaluru on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

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CRIME PATROL

Ex-ACP ends life over ill-health

Bengaluru: Depressed over health problems, a retired ACP committed suicide at his house in Vijayanagar on Sunday. The deceased, Hanumanthappa (69), was a resident of Vinayaka Layout, where he lived with his family. A senior police officer said the incident came to light early in the morning when his family members noticed his hanging body and alerted the police. It is learnt that he had casually spoken to one of his friends over the phone before taking the extreme step. However, he has left no suicide note. Hanumanthappa's daughter stated before the police that her father was suffer from a critical illness. A case of unnatural death has been registered. In case anyone is having suicidal thoughts, one can get in touch with SAHAI helpline at 080-25497777.

Higher-ups in govt being misguided: Roopa

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"ON certain forums, it has been alleged that Bharat Electronics Limited was wrongly disqualified, but it is far from the truth as the company never participated in the tender process," Nimbalkar said.

He said Call-1 was cancelled on January 16 as all the three participants did not meet the conditions for pre-qualification requirements of the tender.

After verifying the pre-qualification and technical requirements, the tender scrutiny committee on June 20 accepted three bids from M/s Larsen & Toubro, Matrix Security and Surveillance Private Ltd and Bharat Electronics Ltd. Call-II was cancelled because the state government had issued an order to ban all products from China, Nimbalkar said.

"The Karnataka government has launched an independent inquiry into the unauthorised means that were used to approach the Project Management Consultant for the Safe City Project," he said.

Call-III of the tender is under way in a transparent manner, he claimed.

Meanwhile, Roopa told *TNIE*, "Even in the latest tender (Call-III), which is presently online in the eProcurement portal, gross irregularities exist."

She said, "As per the finance department's standard bid document KW4 for such tenders, the minimum annual turnover of the bidder must be two times the value of tender. Here, tender value is Rs 620 crore but minimum turnover fixed is Rs 250 crore. Even with the latest amendment, the minimum requirement is 100% of the tender value or amount payable in first year. Even that is about Rs 500 crore. So there is a clear violation of the finance department's direction."

"BEL is the Navratna that has expertise in this work as floated in the tender (installation of CCTV) . It has repeatedly complained that this is done to favour individual particular vendors. It has brought out how the vendor that was favoured was giving Chinese cameras that were unsafe for security," she claimed.

As per Rule 3 Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Rules, she said, "This is a 'supply of goods and services' tender, because it is about CCTV procurement and installation, and not a 'consultancy services' tender."

As per Rule 28H of KTPP Rules, Quality cum Cost Based Selection method can be used only for consultancy services. It is not permitted to be used for this tender. Hence, the KTPP Rules were violated by the tender, she said.

"Nimbalkar has been misguiding the higher-ups in the government," Roopa alleged.

The Bengaluru Safe City Project, under the Nirbhaya scheme, envisages prevention of crimes against women in public places.

ON PAR WITH COPS

Excise dept to propose salary hike to staffers

MG CHETAN @ Bengaluru

WHILE most police personnel, who got pay hikes as per the recommendations of the Raghavendra Auradkar committee are unhappy about the increase only now, the Excise department is all set to propose pay revision on par with the police department. Excise Minister H Nagesh said that an expert committee will soon be set up. "It will study the salary structure of our staff and also of police personnel. Details of the salaries being given to the excise department staff in neighbouring states will also be considered. Once the report is ready, we will send it to the Pay Commission. I hope this will happen soon and the Cabinet approves the report," he said.

He said the pay revision for the excise staff will be recommended based on the nature of work being done. "The ranks and nature of work between the police and excise department are almost similar but there is a disparity in the pay. We won't ask much, but will recommend for salaries on par with police staff across ranks," he explained.

Munusamy lauds MGR, Jaya

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

MUNUSAMY had simply pointed to AIADMK's Rajya Sabha MP, A Navaneethakrishnan, seated in the audience, saying, "That is the answer." The question is whether the BJP would accept the AIADMK as the leader of the National Democratic Alliance in TN, he said.

Munusamy sprinkled his speech with tributes to the party's stalwarts, MG Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa and said the upcoming elections were crucial as it comes at a time when many parties have been speculating on a supposed change of the political scenario in the State. "Such views have been emanating because erstwhile tall leaders like MGR and Amma are not there now. DMK stalwart M Karunanidhi, too, who was on the opposite side, is no more. At such a juncture, many have been dreaming of winning the elections. I wish to convey to them the political history of TN is different from that of the rest of India, because its seeds were sown by Periyar," he said.

Couple elated over PM Modi's mention

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

MODI also lauded the work of newlywed couple **Anudeep Hegde and Minusha** from Byndoor of Udupi district who postponed their honeymoon plans and cleaned up the Someshwara beach over a week in November. The couple managed to collect 800 kg of waste such as plastic bottles, footwear, empty liquor bottles etc, and the local panchayat authorities cleared it later.

Appreciating their efforts, the PM said that while newlyweds usually head for honeymoon destinations, Anudeep and Minusha made their first resolution after marriage to clean the beach. "All of us should question ourselves as to who pollutes beaches, mountains and hills with garbage. We all should conduct cleanliness drives and rid the country of single-use plastic," he said.

Anudeep and Minusha were surprised on Sunday when their friends and relatives called them to say that Modi had mentioned them in his radio programme. The couple said they are inspired by Modi's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and added that the PM identifying their work has brought them much joy.

Anudeep, who is into digital marketing, married Minusha, who works for a pharmaceutical company, on November 18. They decided to clean up Someshwara beach from November 27 and devoted two hours for it.

Anudeep had earlier worked as a volunteer with 'Clean Kundapur Project', an organisation that has already conducted more than 60 beach cleaning drives on the Kodi-Kundapur beach.

EXPRESS READ

Wistron violence: Meet at Vikas Soudha next week

Kolar: Weeks after the violence at the iPhone manufacturing plant, run by Taiwan-based tech giant Wistron Corporation, Labour Minister Shivaram Hebbar visited the facility at Narsapur and said senior officials from the department have gathered all the information about the incident and by next week a meeting will be called in Vikas Soudha. Elected representatives, officials from Wistron and employees will be a part of the meeting. Speaking to media persons here on Sunday, Hebbar said Wistron Corporation is all set to commence work in its Narasapur plant in another 15 days. The corporation has assured to provide employment to all the workers.

Rajini out of hospital

ENS @ Hyderabad

CLOUDS of uncertainty loom over the much-awaited political entry by actor Rajinikanth once again as he has been advised a week's rest and "minimal physical activity" after being discharged from the Apollo Hospitals in Hyderabad on Sunday.

The actor was admitted to the hospital on December 25 following severe fluctuations in his blood pressure and exhaustion. The hospital said that his blood pressure had stabilized and that Rajinikanth was feeling much better.

The actor has been suggested complete bed rest for a week, with regular monitoring of blood pressure levels and minimal physical activity to avoid stress, "in view of his post-transplant status, labile hypertension and age". He was also counselled by the doctors to avoid any activity that increases his risk of contracting Covid-19 infection.

Back home, however, a section of his fans felt that it would be a major setback for the actor, and affect his reliability if he did not keep his word on the party launch by the end of this year. But Rajini Makkal Mandram (RMM) functionaries are hopeful that the actor would launch his political party, as promised, by December 31.

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EDITORIAL

Education must aim to provide, beyond the physical, food for the intellect and soul. That education which ignores man's intrinsic nature, and neglects his intellect and reasoning power can not be considered true education

Haile Selassie

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

UGLY POWER FIGHT SHOWS LIMITS OF COALITIONS IN NEPAL

Less than a month after India sent its top diplomat to Nepal to repair ties, the latter is heading for snap polls after Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli got Parliament dissolved much ahead of schedule. Oli appeared to have no compunction in burning a house to smoke out a rat, as he chose to hit the self-destruct button to avoid sharing power with pushy party rival Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'. The ruling Nepal Communist Party was a post-poll marriage of convenience of their individual parties for power in 2018. But for all practical purposes, it was an uneasy coalition of Left forces that could not be whipped and blended. Running coalitions can be very difficult as smaller but ambitious outfits often try to punch above their weight, as the CPM did during UPA-I in India. As for Prachanda, he is a former PM and has sizable numbers in the ruling party to be a pushover. Managing him called for a large heart and high political skills, not the attributes of petty minds. But Oli had oodles of support from the Chinese envoy. So he created diversions, playing the nationalism card by unilaterally publishing a map that included three contested regions with India as part of Nepal's territory. It bought him some breathing space but Prachanda could not be wished away. Friendship with China came at a cost as it nibbled away at border villages causing public resentment and unrest. Prachanda fanned the flames of misrule and Nepal became ungovernable. Oli then played the Parliament dissolution card to preempt a no-confidence motion and created a virtual split in his party. The dissolution is now before the country's supreme court.

As things stand, the clashing Everest-size egos of the communist heavyweights could work to the advantage of the centrist Nepal Congress and slacken Chinese leverage on the border nation. No wonder Beijing is sending a delegation to explore an improbable patch-up. Nepal Congress rising from the ashes could reset ties with India, as it generally leans towards New Delhi. But for that to happen, the party needs to pick itself up and dust up the disarray in its squabbling leadership to inspire confidence. As for India, the situation is a gift horse, as any dispensation would be better than Oli's.

A LESSON IN LABOUR RIGHTS FROM THE 1860s

Abraham Lincoln was successful in abolishing slavery in the US due to the resolute decisions taken by people within and outside the country. In 1862, the textile mills of Lancashire in Manchester took a decision not to buy raw cotton picked by slaves in the US. Lincoln thanked the owners and workers. The impact was huge, not only on the US but also on Manchester. As the Confederacy was one of the largest cotton growers in the world, Manchester lost a big chunk of raw materials. Many mills shut down. Many lost their livelihood. But hundreds of families in Manchester did play a crucial role in abolishing slavery.

A century and a half later, the heroism that Lincoln extolled seems to have vanished. Major technology and luxury American brands source their products from suppliers in the third world, where the conditions of contractual labourers are no better from what had happened in the Confederacy. Yet, hardly any questions are asked until the issue blows out of proportion, as was the case with the labour unrest at Wistron Corp, which manufactures iPhones for Apple in India. Media and NGO reports have pointed out that this may not be an isolated case, with many companies not paying their workers on time while forcing them to work longer hours.

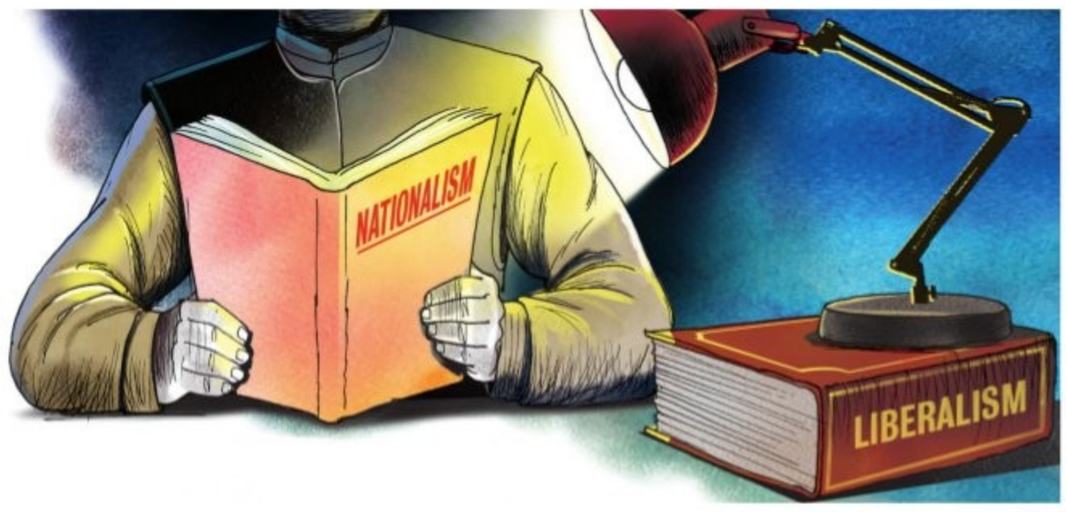
Workers across the manufacturing sector, especially in the garment and automobile businesses, are very unhappy with the working conditions in the post-Covid era. Making matters worse were the labour law "reforms" introduced by the Centre, which allowed the increase of working hours from eight to 12. A study conducted by Penn State University's Center for Global Workers' Rights shows that labourers in garment units are under great stress. International brands are forcing their suppliers, located in nations like India and Bangladesh, to make prices 12% cheaper than last year. The average waiting period for payments from buyers has also risen to 77 days compared to 43 days before Covid. Big brands and governments are doing little to protect workers' rights. So the onus is upon us, the consumers, to make ethical choices that safeguard the rights of the working class.

Liberal America has shown the way. The US democracy, despite its failings, has institutional mechanisms that seek answers and accountability

TACKLING THE RISE OF RIGHT-WING AUTHORITARIANISM

KAPIL SIBAL

Senior lawyer, Congress leader and member of Rajya Sabha



AMIT BANDRE

History has taught us that global trends often drive national narratives. The rise of the nation-state, fall of monarchies, blossoming of democratic values, end of colonialism and seeding of popular movements for self-determination were globally generated phenomena.

After the first decade of the 21st century, there has been a growing skepticism towards liberal democratic principles across the world, paving way for the rise of right-wing populism. The Trump presidency was the result of disenchantment with the global economic order ushered in by the WTO regime with trade across borders as its leitmotif. Occupy Wall Street (2011) was the result of increasing inequalities within the US, which Trump exploited to his advantage. Though over the years consumers benefited, the balance of economic power gradually shifted away. China became a global manufacturing hub, attracting investors to produce goods on a phenomenal scale for global consumption. Producing goods at price levels comparable to that of China was well-nigh impossible. Multinationals and the rich benefited. Globally, the gap between the rich and the poor increased. Americans lost jobs. The 'us' versus 'them' phenomenon gained momentum. The loss of jobs was attributed to 'them'—the immigrants. Trump exploited the angst of Americans by blaming others. China was perceived as the economic villain. Minorities within countries felt uncomfortable as if they were to blame. Strong right-wing governments espousing a majoritarian culture gained acceptability. Institutions were weakened and denigrated. Minorities and others perceived as 'them' were targeted in different ways in countries across the world. This was a global narrative.

Our present government's national narrative was a variant of this global phenomenon. It is substantially aligned with that of the party (BJP) and driven by the RSS.

The fallout of this global narrative impacts national narratives, manifesting itself in ways that have diminished democracy. These can be divided into three broad categories in respect of nations whose footprints impact the lives of billions.

One narrative that we are witnessing in democratic countries is the assertion of power by denigrating established mechanisms embedded within institutional frameworks. Every democratic nation, by virtue of this narrative, seeks to perpetuate a divisive agenda to retain power. Governments seek to blame others for their own shortcomings. This allows for the propagation of emotive, majoritarian agendas. Their economic policy framework seeks to blame others for the fall in 'standards of living' within. Previous administrations are also targeted for embracing faulty policies benefiting the outsider at the cost of hurting the insider. The other narrative for governments is to start patting themselves for the claimed successes not necessarily based on supporting data. In a nutshell, the narrative is—blame others, praise yourself. This is common to most democratic nations. In this process, minorities are targeted and majoritarian cultural chauvinism is fuelled.

The third narrative that we are witnessing is that authoritarian governments are silencing dissent in diverse ways. This includes the use of violence by targeting those who vociferously oppose the leadership. Countries that were otherwise perceived to be moving along the liberal path are slowly backing off by adopting right-wing policies and thus becoming increasingly insular in their policy prescriptions. From a relatively borderless world where free trade was the norm, we are seeing a world where borders are sacrosanct and free trade is not the preferred option. In this process, the phenomenon of 'country-first' has now occupied centrestage.

In the subcontinent, these institutional mechanisms have failed. In India, enunciating an alternative narrative that can reach more than a billion people is a Herculean task

With the significant shift of economic power to the Asia-Pacific region, India seems to be caught in the middle. Given the instability in our bilateral relationships, especially in the wake of recent incidents in the Ladakh region and Pakistan's persistent efforts to disturb the peace, we are following policy prescriptions for public acclaim as a riposte to Chinese infiltration. This has resulted in an adverse impact on our trade with China. This too may have been one of the reasons why we have chosen not to be part of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The narrative within India follows the global pattern. Our liberal democratic Constitution is defaced by authoritarian prescriptions. Violence and constitutionally virulent laws seek to generate animosity. Dissent is not tolerated. The opposition is not heard. Constitutional and institutional mechanisms are being captured by the government with pliant nominees. Mainstream media is no longer embarrassed to act as an arm of the government. Blaming the past and patting themselves for their so-called glorious achievements, even in the absence of proof, is the new narrative. Unfortunately, this brings electoral dividends election after election. The narrative has been carefully sold and easily bought in the absence of an alternative.

There are, however, a few oases that have not allowed these narratives to gain the upper hand though the ugly face of such narratives seems to be rising even there.

The moot point is whether the tide of rising right-wing authoritarian culture can be sustained or whether an alternative narrative is possible in the years ahead. Liberal America has shown the way that this can be done. American democracy, despite its failings, has institutional mechanisms that seek answers and accountability. There is still a relatively level playing field in which others can be heard. This is also true of most of Europe. Unfortunately, in the Asian subcontinent, these institutional mechanisms have failed. In India, the task to persuade the public and to be able to enunciate an alternative narrative that can reach more than a billion people is a Herculean one. This perhaps can only happen if the entire opposition, in unison, can articulate its concerns. That by itself may not be enough, for their voice must reach every village and every elector willing to listen. The biased mainstream media and some communication networks are an impediment. Times are tough but lives are built on hope.

(Tweets @KapilSibal)

THE TROUBLE WITH NEP'S MULTIPLE ENTRY/EXIT SYSTEM

AMRUTH G KUMAR

Head, School of Education, Central University of Kerala

The cynosure of the new National Education Policy (NEP 2020) is the Multiple Entry/Exit System (MEES) in higher education. Even left-wing intellectuals, vehement critics of the NEP, seem to be impressed with the concept of the MEES and believe that it will be of great benefit to economically and socially disadvantaged students.

What is meant by MEES? It allows a student to drop their course and resume it when convenient. A student unable to continue his/her studies due to financial difficulties can exit to find a job and make money so that the studies can be resumed. In other words, the MEES is an opportunity for financially challenged students to complete their studies on their own. Probably the economic factor is only one among many that causes dropouts in higher education. Other reasons like social, familial, religious, etc., are also prevalent in India. For example, girls who get married early or are pregnant while pursuing a degree and those who are experiencing physical hardship due to accidents or diseases will see the MEES as a blessing.

But a more in-depth analysis of the concept shows practical complications and the attempt to turn education from a social responsibility to a personal responsibility.

Though enrolment in higher education in India is only about 26%, the dropout rate is low compared to the school level. The latest figures show that the dropouts in higher education over the past few decades have been contained. According to figures released by the Minister of Education in Parliament in February 2020, the dropout rate in IITs is just 1% in 2020. In 2015-16, it was 2.25%. The dropout rate in IIMs decreased from 1.04% in 2015-16 to 1% in 2020. At the university level, the dropout rate was 7.49% in 2015-16 and it declined to 2.82% by 2020. But with the implementation of MEES, this is likely to rise sharply. The concept of multiple exits legitimises student dropouts. It is ironic that the NEP vows to raise the enrolment to higher education to 50% by 2030 on the one hand and legitimises dropouts on the other.

The MEES does not have the provision to ensure that the students who exited will join back. Therefore, only those who return voluntarily are likely to become beneficiaries of the multiple entry option. It is quite natural that a large segment of people planning to return may postpone it, even for trivial reasons. Only those who have made a very strong decision to learn by overcoming the pressures of the job environment are likely to return. Otherwise, the vast majority is likely to fall into the trap of deciding to go as far as possible with the work they are currently doing and the pay they are getting out of it. Fatalism is a major driving force for a majority of Indians.

Educational institutions are likely to face a lot of glitches while implementing the MEES. One of the main problems would be determining the number of students to be admitted each year. For example, suppose the total intake of a degree programme is 30 students per year for a college. If, by the second semester, 10 students exit and about 20 students who dropped out years ago are in queue for entry at the same time, it will upset the teacher-pupil ratio and infrastructural facilities available. What is likely to happen, naturally, is restrictions being imposed on the number of students likely to resume their studies each year. So, MEES would not ensure entry according to the will of the students, but on the conditions of the institutions. At the same time, multiple entry admission in government colleges and universities can be given only by following reservation policy. Private institutions, on the other hand, would deem this a good opportunity to charge exorbitant fees from those students who seek entry back to resume their studies.

Dropout rates in higher education have declined over the past few decades. ... But with the implementation of MEES, this is likely to rise sharply. It is ironic that the NEP vows to raise enrolment to higher education to 50% by 2030 while legitimising dropouts

There are some dangers lurking in the glorification of the economically self-reliant studenthood. Education is a social responsibility. That is why governments undertake the responsibility of providing free and compulsory education to all. The 1990 declaration of the Jomtien Conference on 'Education for All' was warmly welcomed and sought to be implemented by the nations of the world, including India, with the conviction that education is a social responsibility. Subsequently, the Supreme Court of India's landmark judgment in Unnikrishnan J P vs State of Andhra Pradesh & Others in 1993 held that education is a fundamental right flowing from Article 21. Thus, the 86th amendment provided for a follow-up legislation for the Right to Education Act, 2009. In line with this legislation, the government's project to universalise higher education, the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), was implemented in 2013. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen reminds us that money spent by governments on education is not an expenditure, but an investment.

MEES may appear to be a student-friendly policy, but it implies that education is a private responsibility. While no child in a financially secure home will drop out of college due to the want of money, MEES, if implemented, will result in a distorted educational experience for financially disadvantaged students.

At present, there are many schemes like scholarships in place to help students with higher education. However, with the general consensus that students can study on their own, it will be a good justification to withdraw all such scholarships.

Though we have mark sheets and CGPAs about the achievement of students in various courses, we lack a similar one that has a critical role in bolstering the students to gain these achievements. An economic status card should be introduced for every student who is pursuing higher education in India. This would help the institutions monitor the financial crunch that a student faces while pursuing a programme. This card should be maintained by educational administrators or local bodies that support education. Will our educational authorities dare to maintain an economic status card of every student? If so, this would be a revolutionary change in the advancement of a welfare model of education. NEP 2020 has to be revised to include schemes to ensure that no student exits due to lack of money. Every student who is forced to exit shall be bolstered by a financial package to continue their studies in the same institution. An amendment of NEP 2020 in this direction would be a good gesture from a welfare state.

(amruth@cukerala.ac.in)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Tough preconditions

This is with reference to *Farmers set date for talks, but add tough conditions.* (Dec 27). There are indications that the agitation is fast losing public support over the demand for rescinding the three farm laws as a precondition for talks.

K R Parvathy, Mysuru

Rise of youngsters

The CPM's Arya Rajendran, aged 21, is set to become Thiruvananthapuram's mayor. The rise of the new generation was visible in the recent local body polls irrespective of the party. This was much needed as otherwise society would decay.

Jaya Thampi, Oachira

Captain's knock

It was a captain's knock by Ajinkya Rahane on the second day of the Melbourne Test. Team India is now in a commanding position thanks to his century and can look for an upset win against the Aussies to level the series.

N A Joseph, Ettumanoor

Tactical nous too

No praise is too high for Rahane. Debutant Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja too batted well to put India in the driver's seat. Rahane also earned laurels for his tactical nous that helped India bowl out the Aussies for 195.

N J Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

Kerala CM did well

The author of *Governorship is boring. Power matters* (Dec 27) is right in his assessment of the diplomatic ability of the Kerala CM to defuse the situation after the Governor's refusal to convene a special session of the Assembly. Arif sahib has vast experience but had to enact this drama to show his loyalty to the Centre.

Dr M Haneef, Kottayam

Constitution & convention

If a Governor's loyalty must be to the Constitution and only to the Constitution as observed by the author, he need not be expected to always go by convention.

Narayanaswamy Raman, Parali

Govt didn't give proper reply

The Governor didn't take the stand that he would not allow the special session. Rather he wanted an explanation on the emergency to hold it when the Assembly was set to convene soon. The government failed to give a proper reply. The other doubts he raised were also genuine.

R Gopinathan, Thiruvananthapuram

Not a hero

The UP CM is no 'Hindutva Hero' (Sunday magazine, Dec 27). His government's handling of the Hathras rape and its insensitive encounters have put the nation to shame.

M Somasekhar Prasad, Hyderabad

CPM's communal card

The CPM has been deftly and subtly playing the communal card for electoral gains in Kerala since 1969 (*Comrade Vijayan and communal Communism*, Dec 27). It is now being perfected under the leadership of CM Pinarayi Vijayan. If the people fail to see through its games, the state will have to pay a heavy price.

C G Kuriakose, Kothamangalam

Efficient administrator

The Kerala CM has been an efficient administrator. That he is enjoying the confidence of people from all walks of life is irksome to his political opponents.

Karuvan H, Udma

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Kapil Sibal @KapilSibal
PM: Some people try and give us lessons in democracy How can they ? You have given them so many lessons to unlearn it !

Jagat Prakash Nadda @JPNadd
Thank You Arunachal Pradesh. Clean sweep by BJP in Gram Sabha & Zila Parishad elections is a testament of PM's efforts for growth of Arunachal...

Ramdas Athawale @RamdasAthawale
Earlier I gave the slogan 'Go Corona, Corona Go' and now corona is going. For the new coronavirus strain, I give the slogan of 'No Corona, Corona No'

Insulated waterproof tents set up to face harsh winter days at the Singhu border; Farmers beat utensils to protest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann ki Baat programme on Sunday | SHEKHAR YADAV

Farmers' income rose only by ₹ 2.5K in four years

Farmers in Punjab, Haryana and Kerala earn the maximum from cultivation; those in Jharkhand, Andhra and UP earn the least

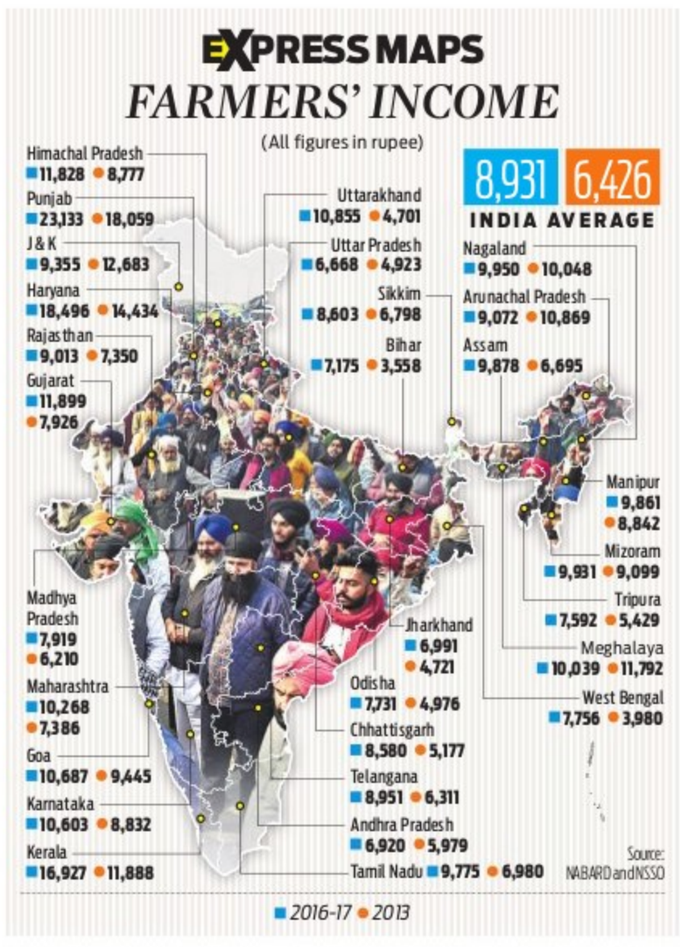
KUMAR VIKRAM @ New Delhi

AN analysis of government data reveals only a marginal improvement in farmers' income in the country during the NDA rule as compared to the previous UPA dispensation.

As per a National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) study, Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households, in 2013, the average monthly income of farmers stood at ₹6,426. In 2016-17, it reached ₹8,931, showed a survey conducted by NABARD, marking an increase of only ₹2,505 between 2012-13 and 2016-17. The NSSO has not conducted any survey on income per agricultural household after 2013.

A marked variation was noted among states with respect to the average monthly household income of agricultural households. Agricultural households in states like Punjab, Haryana and Kerala (see map) reported maximum levels of income, which indicates that this sector is making a sizeable contribution to these states' economy. On the other hand, agricultural households in states like Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh reported average monthly incomes of less than ₹7,000 each.

Agriculture economist Devinder Sharma says farmers have not benefited from agricultural growth year after year. "If you adjust the increase against inflation, the farm income remains static or even shows a decline over the years," he said.



he said.

The NABARD survey gave more insights into the financial condition of farmers and the relation it has with the size of their land holdings. Among agricultural households with size class of less than 0.01 hectare, cultivation accounted for merely 7% of the total household income, while for the size class of more than 2.0 ha, its contribution rose to over 50% of the total income.

In absolute terms, the income from cultivation showed a marked increase by size class of land possessed, with households having the land size of more than 2 ha earning over 13 times from the same source for households with less than 0.1 ha of land. This may directly be attributed to greater production potential and thereby higher profitability because of the scale of cultivation undertaken on the land available.

As per the survey, only 13% of farmers in the country have land of 2 ha and above and 20% have land between 2 ha and 1 ha. Nearly 30% of agricultural households have land between 0.4 hectare and 1 hectare while 31% have less than 0.4 hectare.

Agricultural households with more than 2 ha of land earned close to twice the amount earned by the ones having marginal landholdings.

For households in the size class of less than 0.1 ha, wage labour was the most prominent source, with the average contribution of ₹3,508 to the total income of ₹8,136. Government/private service emerged as the next most preferred source with the average contribution of ₹2,192, followed by livestock rearing (₹1,345).

According to the NABARD survey, the agricultural households showed a greater dependence on multiple sources, with 50% reported to have two sources of income, while close to 40% depended on more than two sources for income. It showed that income only from agriculture was not enough for the households.

Punjab lawyer commits suicide over agri laws

A lawyer from Punjab allegedly committed suicide by consuming poison a few kilometres from the site of a farmers' protest at Tikri border. Amarjit Singh from Jalalabad in Punjab's Fazilka district was taken to the PGIMS in Rohtak where doctors declared him dead on arrival, police said. In a purported suicide note, Singh said he was sacrificing his life in support of the farmers' agitation so that the government is compelled to listen to the voice of the people.

Uttarakhand cops file case against 1,000 farmers

The Uttarakhand Police has registered case against over 1,000 farmers who marched towards Delhi after breaking the barricading. Daleep Singh Kunwar, SSP, US Nagar said, "Inquiry in being conducted. The case has been registered under various sections of IPC." Farmers, who were marching to Delhi to join the farmers' agitation, clashed with the police in Udham Singh Nagar district on Friday. A footage had surfaced in which a tractor is pushing over a police barricade.

Kejriwal dares Centre for open debate on laws

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday appealed to the Centre to repeal the new farm laws and said farmers are protesting for their survival and also said that there should be a open debate between the parties. "I challenge any Union minister to debate with farmers on agri laws, it will be clear how beneficial or harmful the laws are," said Kejriwal, who visited the protest site for the second time. He paid his first visit on December 7.

PM invokes Sikh gurus, farmers clang *thaalis* in protest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi sought to reach out to the agitating farmers, most of them from Punjab, on Sunday by invoking the sacrifices made by revered Sikh personalities while the farmers clanged thaalis (plates) during his *Mann ki Baat* as part of their protest against the agri laws.

The PM, in his monthly radio address, said the sacrifices made by Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh and his sons and Mata Gujri helped protect the country's culture. "We pay tributes to the brave Chaar Sahibzaade, we remember Mata Gujri, we recall the greatness of Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. We remain indebted to these greats for their sacrifices and their spirit of compassion," he said.

> **We pay tributes to the brave Chaar Sahibzaade, we remember Mata Gujri, we recall the greatness of Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. We remain indebted to these greats**
>
> Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

While the PM's address was being broadcast, the protesting farmers at Singhu, Tekri and Ghazipur borders beat utensils, an idea the PM had floated in the initial days of coronavirus-mandated lockdown as a mark of gratitude to the Covid warriors.

At many places across Punjab, Haryana and other states, people from other sections of society joined the thaali banging protest in solidarity with the farmers.

Last week, farmer leaders had appealed to people to beat utensils during Modi's radio address saying they were tired of listening to his Mann Ki Baat and it's time he listened to them instead.

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, in a scathing attack on the BJP over the "malicious and derogatory" terms allegedly used against the protesting farmers, asked the party to stop maligning farmers and their genuine fight for justice by dubbing them "urban Naxals, Khalistanis, hooligans etc."

BJP chief Nadda posts Rahul's old speech to take swipe at him

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

BJP president J P Nadda on Sunday shared an old video of Rahul Gandhi's speech in Lok Sabha in which he seems to be advocating the need for farmers to get rid of middlemen and sell their produce directly, as he accused the Congress leader of playing politics over the ongoing farmers' protest.

"What is this magic happening Rahul ji. You are opposing now what you had advocated earlier...You have to play politics only. But this is your bad luck that your hypocrisy will not work. People of the country and farmers have recognised your double standards," Nadda tweeted in Hindi along with the video clip.

The Congress has backed the farmers' protest against three agriculture-marketing laws which give cultivators an option to sell their produce directly to private players.

In his speech, apparently made in the last Lok Sabha when he was an MP from Amethi, Gandhi is heard saying that a farmer during his trip to Uttar Pradesh asked him to explain the "magic" behind a packet of potato chips costing ₹10 while farmers sell potato for ₹2 per kg.

When he asked what they thought was the reason for this, the farmer said factories are located very far from them and if they could sell their produce directly there.

A protesting farmer at Singhu border in New Delhi on Sunday | SHEKHAR YADAV

CONG HITS BACK: THERE IS NO MSP ON POTATOES

The Congress on Sunday hit back at BJP president JP Nadda after he attacked Rahul Gandhi for opposing the new farm laws. Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said that before targeting Gandhi, the BJP chief should have known there is no MSP on potatoes. "Dear Nadda ji, before misleading the farmers, you should have known that there is no MSP on potatoes. And...we also want reforms in the agriculture sector, but the question here is the way the life of farmers has been attacked," he tweeted.

Strain in ties? Defections violate coalition dharma, says JD-U

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ Patna

MIFFED over the defection of its six MLAs to the BJP in Arunachal Pradesh, the JD-U made it resentment known to its senior NDA ally saying that the move was against the spirit of alliance politics espoused by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

JD-U chief general secretary KC Tyagi also raked up the issue of *'love jihad'*, saying that it is being used to divide the nation and the society. At a meeting of the party's national executive in Patna, the JD-U passed a resolution against the anti-conversion laws that were introduced by the BJP governments in other states such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

"The JD-U is extremely shocked, grieved and feeling hurt over Arunachal Pradesh's defection of its six MLAs to BJP. It is out and out anti-alliance in spirit," Tyagi said at a hurriedly called media briefing on Sunday. "*Jo kuch bhi* Arunachal Pradesh *me hua* BJP *ke doara yae allinace-dharm ke liye shubh nahi hai. Ye gatbandhan dharm ke virudh hai aur* JD-U *kaafi dukhi hai*" (Whatever happened in Arunachal Pradesh courtesy BJP is not a good sign for alliance. This is against alliance ethics and JD-U is extremely unhappy over it)."

The BJP should have followed the "gathbandhan dharma" like in the times of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Tyagi said. "We wanted proportional participation in the NDA ministry in the Centre but, unfortunately, Amit Shah included our MLAs into his party."

The **Nitish Kumar**-led JD-U will contest the Bengal elections alone as well as in other states, he announced. Later, party insiders averred that as the LJP had queered the pitch of JD-U in Bihar elections supposedly at the behest of the BJP, the party may follow suit in Bengal against the BJP to take revenge for Arunachal.

"It has already started to take on whatever happened in Arunachal Pradesh," a party insider said. Six out of the seven JD-U MLAs in Arunachal joined the BJP, leaving the party tottering with just one legislator in the 60-member Assembly.

EXPRESS READ

Lowest Covid daily tally in 6 months

New Delhi: India's daily number of Covid-19 cases on Sunday stood at 18,732, the lowest since July 1, when 18,653 cases were recorded. Also, 279 deaths were recorded in the past 24 hours, taking the overall count since the outbreak in January to 1,47,622. The overall positive cases stood at 1,01,87,850.

Police deserter, 3 JeM cadres arrested

Srinagar: A SPO, who had left the police force in October to join militancy, was arrested alongwith three Jaish-e-Mohammad militant associates from central Kashmir's Budgam district on Sunday. The police also foiled an attempt to carry out blasts in in border district of Poonch.

Leadership issue, shrinking base worry Congress on foundation day

RICHA SHARMA @ New Delhi

LEADERSHIP issue, growing dissent and shrinking electoral support — several challenges lay ahead of the Congress as it observe 136th foundation day on Monday.

While, the party's Central Election Authority (CEA) is in process of completing formalities for holding presidential elections early 2021, there is no clarity if Rahul Gandhi will make a comeback as party chief or a non-Gandhi will take over from Sonia Gandhi.

According to party sources, Gandhi scion is not ready to take up the responsibility. However, during a recent meeting with senior party leaders — group of letter writers — and with Sonia, he had said that he will 'take up work what party' assigns him.

Meanwhile, the party continues to remain a divided house with senior leaders demanding organisational elections and solution to ambiguity over leadership issues. Ahead of the party's foundation day, Rahul is reported to have travelled to Milan on Sunday.

"We want that Rahul owns up the responsibility 24X7 and not just limit himself to bashing the PM. The party needs a complete overhaul in order to connect with people and take on divisive politics of the BJP," said a senior party leader.

The party was routed in assembly and municipal elections across several states. What worries many senior party leaders is party's lack of focus and poor preparedness for upcoming assemble elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry.

"For the last 1.5 years (since Lok Sabha elections 2019), we have not been unable to address leadership issues while the BJP has been strengthening its base in south, east. This has demoralised our workers on ground," said a party functionary.

The party, in solidarity with the farmers sitting on indefinite protest against the anti-farmers laws, has decided to take out Tiranga Yatras across the party offices on Monday. There will also be a flag hoisting ceremony at the party headquarters and only Congress Working Committee members are expected to attend.

RAHUL ON HOLIDAY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi left for abroad on Sunday for a short personal visit. Though the Congress did not disclose Gandhi's destination, the chief spokesperson of the party confirmed that he will be away for a few days

7 KILLED AS BUS COLLIDES WITH TRUCK IN ASSAM

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	24	8	Mumbai	29	24
Bhopal	24	7	Panaji	32	24
Jaipur	23	12	Patna	24	13
Amritsar	19	3	Lucknow	22	11
Chennai	30	23	Port Blair	30	26
Kolkata	27	19	Imphal	24	9
Srinagar	4	-5	Chandigarh	22	7

Police name Army Captain, two locals for killing 3 in fake encounter

FAYAZ WANI
@ Srinagar

A police investigation into the July 18 Shopian fake encounter has established that army captain Bhoopendra Singh along with two local residents had hatched a conspiracy to abduct civilians and stage a fake encounter.

Police has presented a 1,400 page charge-sheet against the accused in a local court in Shopian. The court has sought opinion from the Army on whether the accused officer can be tried by the Criminal Court of ordinary jurisdiction or by the Court Martial.

A police official said during investigation into the July 18 encounter at Amshipora in which army had claimed that three hardcore militants were killed, it was established that a conspiracy was hatched by accused Captain Bhoopendra Singh alias Major Basheer Khan and others to abduct the civilians and stage a fake encounter.

> They deliberately chose not to follow SOPs and planted illegally acquired weapons on the dead bodies
>
> A police official

"They deliberately and purposefully chose not to follow SOPs and planted illegally acquired weapons and material on the dead bodies after stripping them of their identities. They tagged them as hardcore terrorists in possession of war-like stores and deliberately provided false information to colleagues/senior," he said.

The army had claimed that two pistols with two magazines and four empty cartridges, 15 live cartridges & 15 empty cartridges of AK series weapon and other objectionable items were recovered from the encounter site.

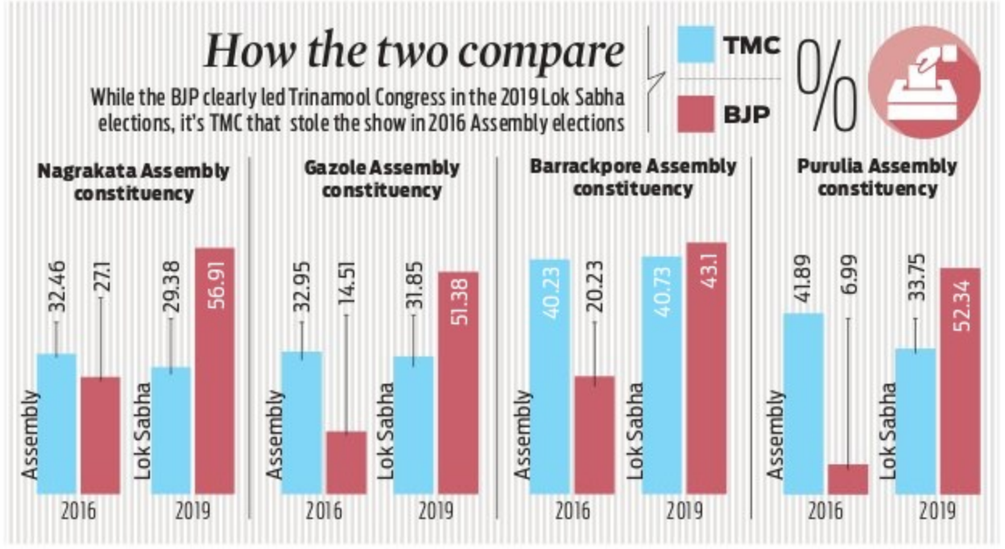
Twenty two days after the encounter, three families from Kotranka area of Rajouri alleged that their wards Abrar Ahmad, Imtiyaz Ahmad and Abrar Ahmad, who had gone to the Valley on July 16 to work as labourers, have gone missing.

Subsequently during separate investigations by police and the army, it was established that three labourers from Rajouri were killed in the Shopian fake encounter. Later, their bodies were exhumed from a graveyard in north Kashmir and taken to their native places for proper burial.

The police official said during the investigation, on disclosure of accused persons, J&K police's Special Investigation Team (SIT) recreated all the scenes of the crime, including routes used after meeting the victims and the place where the victims were murdered.

"All the circumstantial evidence including two vehicles, the service rifle of Captain Bhoopendra Singh were seized," he said.

Police have recorded the statement of one of the accused Bilal Ahmed Lone.



Mamata's nephew hits out at Suvendu, BJP

Abhishek calls ex-TMC leader an 'asymptomatic traitor', reacts sharply to *tolabaj bhaipo* jibe, says will hang self if proven corrupt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kolkata

TRINAMOOL Congress leader and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee on Sunday lashed out at former TMC leader Suvendu Adhikari calling him an "asymptomatic traitor".

Adhikary had recently left the TMC and joined the BJP.

Abhishek said Adhikari remained hidden in the TMC for so many years, like the coronovirus.

"He is an asymptomatic traitor. If he is ashamed for having been associated with the Trinamool for 21 years, then why is he still living in the same household with his father and brother?" the MP from Diamond Harbour asked.

Abhishek also hit out at the BJP's relentless attack on him with *tolabaj bhaipo* (extortionist nephew) jibe, Abhishek said if anyone can prove his involvement in any malpractice, he will hang himself on gallows set up by the saffron camp.

Without naming Adhikari, who has been shouting slogans *tolabaj bhaipo hatao* (reject extortionist nephew) everyday since he joined the BJP, Banerjee said, "you (Suvendu) were seen accepting money in Narada sting operation. You are an accused in Sarada chit fund scam. Then who is the extortionist?"

Abhishek Banerjee

Targeting BJP's national vice president Mukul Roy, once second-in-command in the TMC, and Suvendu, Banerjee said, "They are saying Bhaipo is a *tolabaaj*. Let them prove it. I challenge them. Instead, they are the ones who are entangled with Sarada and Narada scams, not me. CBI is not investigating me, the central agency is investigating them. And yet they call me corrupt. How do they have the temerity to do so? If my involvement is proved I will accept my death," the young leader said.

Questions raised on new MLAs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

A section of functionaries in BJP's Bengal chapter raised question on the electoral dividend ahead of the Assembly elections. The party has inducted new MLAs—three from the Trinamool Congress and one from the Congress—in the saffron camp in the presence of Amit Shah on December 19. They had failed to secure leads in their constituencies in last year's general elections. None of the MLAs from Nagrakata, Gazole, Barrackpore and Purulia Assembly constituencies, could secure lead for their own party. In all the four Assembly seats BJP had bagged lead in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Intra-party discontent among the functionaries in the BJP's lower tier surfaced after a number of party workers came in from the TMC.

Gujarat ATC officials with Abdul Majid Kutti | PTI

Gujarat ATS nabs Dawood's aide on the run for 23 yrs

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

In a major achievement, Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) nabbed a close aide of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim who had been absconding for the last 24 years. Abdul Majid Kutti was arrested from Jamshedpur.

Kutti, who hails originally from Kerala, was staying in Jamshedpur in a rented accommodation for the last one and a half years with fake documents under the name Md Kamaal.

His name figured in an arms supply case in 1996. He alleged received a consignment of arms from an agency in Pakistan on behest of Dawood Ibrahim to be used to stage attacks on the Republic Day in Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Since then, he had been absconding. According to the police, Kutti had been staying in Jamshedpur for the last one and half years after his return from Malaysia.

"Acting on a tip-off, Gujarat ATS started hunting for him with the help of local police and arrested him late in the night on December 25," stated an official release from Jharkhand Police. He was staying at the Sahara City.

Kutti's identity was confrimed during the interogation.

Kutti has been arrested under Arms Act and Explosives Substances Act in a case lodged at Mahsana Police Station in Gujarat.

Inner Line Permit, Centre's biggest gift to Manipur: Shah

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR
@ Guwahati

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) was Centre biggest gift to Manipur since its creation as a state.

"ILP was a long-standing demand of the indigenous people of Manipur. They demanded it for so long that once they forgot it. Prime Minister Narendra Modiji thought denying ILP to them will be an injustice. So, he gave it to the state in December last year. This is the biggest gift given by the Centre to Manipur since it was established as a state," Shah said.

ILP is an official document that allows inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period. Currently, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur are covered under it.

Shah slammed the Congress, saying the party did nothing to solve the insurgency problem in Manipur.

"During Congress rule, there was no peace process with the insurgent groups or the surrender of their members and people kept getting killed (in insurgency-related violence). The BJP government has established peace in Manipur," the Home Minister said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh at the foundation stone laying ceremony of seven major projects in Manipur | PTI

He said during the past six and half years of Modi government, peace agreements were signed with most groups.

"The Northeast was known for insurgency and violence. But now, most groups have laid down arms. I believe the remaining groups, which are outside the purview of peace process, will soon join the mainstream," Shah said.

"There was a time when Manipur was known for bandhs and blockades. Law and order always used to be in discussions. Modiji had promised to the people of Manipur that bandhs and blockades will be a thing of the past and over the past three years, there was not a single bandh in the state," Shah said.

Chief Minister N Biren Singhji has given a new identity to Manipur by ridding the state of bandhs and blockades and taking it on the road to development, Shah said. He appealed to the civil society groups to have faith in the government.

ED issues notice to Raut's wife over PNC bank case

SUDHIR SURYAWAMSHI @ Mumbai

SHIV Sena leader and editor of Saamana Sanjay Raut's wife Varsha Raut has been summoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the Punjab National Cooperative (PNC) bank case.

Varsha Raut has been asked to appear before the ED on Tuesday

According to a source, Pravin Raut, a close relative of Sanjay Raut has earlier been questioned and arrested by the ED. "In the probe, some amount has been transferred from the bank account of Pravin Raut to Varsha Raut. ED wanted to know details of that particular transaction," the source said.

However, Sanjay Raut has in his Rajya Sabha election affidavit mentioned that Pravin Raut has given some money to Varsha Rautas as loan.

On Saturday, NCP leader Eknath Khadse was also summoned by ED in connection with a Pune MIDC land case. Khadse recently left the BJP blaming the party' state leadership former for destroying his political career.

Moreover, Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Sarnaik and his family members were also summoned by the ED earlier.

Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant said BJP is playing very dirty politics. He said ED has been clearly misused to target the political opponents.

EXPRESS READ

Deshmukh roasts CBI over Sushant probe

Mumbai: Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh on Sunday criticised the CBI over its probe into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death. Deshmukh asked why the agency has not submitted a report even after five months since it started its probe. "The CBI hastily snatched the Sushant Singh Rajput probe from the Mumbai police. Now, they should table the probe. The people of India want to know whether Sushant died of suicide," he said. "The CBI needs to come out clean and clear over this issue as early as possible," Deshmukh said

MP puts off Assembly session due to Covid

Bhopal: The winter session of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, which was scheduled to begin on on Monday, has been postponed in view of the Covid-19 situation, an official said on Sunday. This decision was taken at an all-party meeting held here in evening, he said. "The three-day session has been postponed due to the COVID-19 situation. These days will be added in the Budget session, which would be a lengthy one," a source said.

BIG BAIT

Solar pumps to improve natural flow of water, help tigers catch prey

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

SOLAR-POWERED motor pumps are being installed in Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR) to ensure the natural flow of water into the streams and rivulets even during summers in a bid to give wild animals a natural feel. Forest officials said the new motor pumps are also a part of the efforts to increase the prey-base for tigers in PTR. It is believed that once they get adequate water and grassland in PTR, Neelgai and Sambhar which are among favorite prey of tigers will be drawn to the reserve.

Presently 10 solar powered water pumps have been installed at different locations in PTR as a pilot project. More will be installed on the basis of the assessment done by officials. Ten more such pumps are to be installed in the second phase of the project this year.

"In order to increase prey base for tigers, we have installed 10 solar powered water pumps in different strategic locations which will ensure regular flow of water into the streams giving a natural feel to the wild animals," said PTR Director YK Das. These solar pumps will keep on pumping water regularly into the streams and rivulets inside the PTR and get switched off automatically after the sunset, he added.

According to Das, water will be released naturally to the steams during summers, making them alive, which will also fill up the craters inside the reserve.

These pumps will also help in maintaining water level in dams and ponds inside PTR.

BHOPAL DIARY

ANURAAG SINGH
Our correspondent in Madhya Pradesh
singhanuraag.jaurno@gmail.com

CM in menacing mood, says he will bury mafia

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is totally a changed leader after definitive assembly by-election win. The confidence ushered by the poll outcome is for all to see in his public speeches. Even before his attacking speech on 'Love Jihad' could fade from public memory, Chouhan came with another aggressive speech on Good Governance Day. "I'm in a dangerous mood nowadays. I will not spare those who are involved in illegal activities. Leave Madhya Pradesh, otherwise, I will bury you 10 feet," he said

Ex-min blames state Cong leadership for debacle

All isn't well in the opposition Congress after last month's assembly by-election loss in Madhya Pradesh. A video showing ex minister and four time MLA Lakhan Singh Yadav blaming the state party's top leadership for the by-poll debacle recently went viral. In the video Yadav is seen ridiculing the surveys on the basis of which candidates were fielded. Yadav is also seen in the video mocking at state party chief Kamal Nath for his miscalculations about the poll outcome. Lakshan Yadav is four-time MLA from Bhitarwar seat of Gwalior district

X-mas eve dancing by belly dancers lands popular restobar in trouble

Dance by foreign belly dancers brought from Mumbai has landed a high-profile restaurant-bar of Bhopal in trouble. The videos of the belly dancers dancing at the resto-bar on Xmas eve went viral. Just hours later, the license of the bar was suspended for violation of provisions on five counts, including organising dance, misconduct of bar owner with cops and storing batches of illicit liquor

No entry for Scindia loyalists at BJP's training camp

Ex-union minister and Rajya Sabha member attended for the first time on Friday a BJP training camp organised at a resort in Sehore district. The camp for the party chiefs from 52 districts was also attended by CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and central BJP leaders Murlidhar Rao and Pankaja Munde. However, there was no entry at the venue for Scindia loyalists, including minister Prabhuram Chowdhary and ex-ministers Imarti Devi, Tulsi Silawat and Govind Singh Rajput as they weren't on the guest list

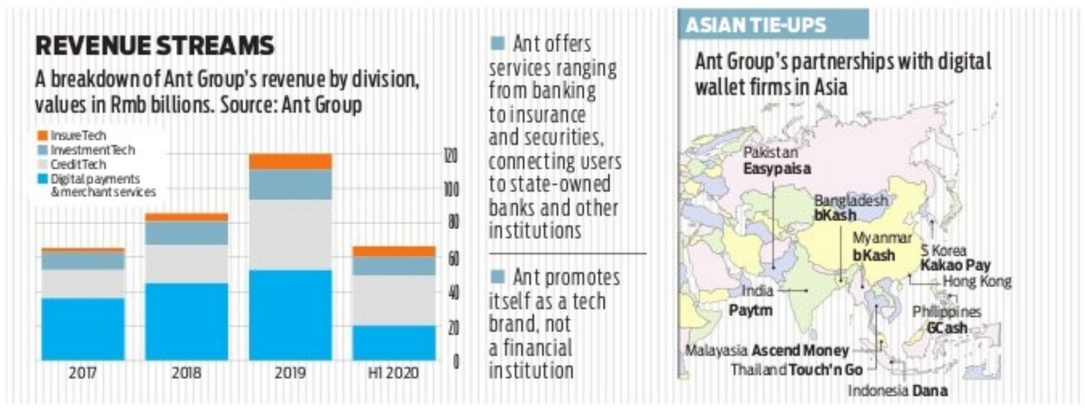
1.75 mn
The toll from the coronavirus globally has passed 1.75 million

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	18	7	SNY	Los Angeles	31	18	SNY
Colombo	30	26	TDS	Melbourne	24	13	LC
Dhaka	34	25	LC	Moscow	15	9	LR
Dubai	37	25	SNY	New York	13	13	HR
Houston	33	21	LC	Singapore	32	26	TDS
Istanbul	24	17	LC	Toronto	16	11	LC
London	12	9	LR	Washington	19	15	LR

China escalates its Jack Ma feud by reining in Ant

Iconic tech entrepreneur has long clashed with Chinese Communist Party leadership



BEIJING

JACK MA, the ebullient and unconventional billionaire founder of Alibaba and the totem of China's entrepreneurial brilliance, now finds himself up against a Communist leadership seemingly intent on hacking back his empire and issuing a lesson that no one is bigger than the party.

At a October conference in Shanghai, Ma, who normally walks a fine line between outspokeness and not annoying the Chinese government, may have overstepped his bounds. He called Chinese lenders "pawn shops" and said government regulators didn't understand the internet. He also criticised the "old men" of the global banking community.

Since November, Ma has evaporated from the spotlight he normally so ably commands. Furthermore, an unidentified source told *Bloomberg* that he was advised by the government to not leave the country.

Ma, the most recognisable face in Asian business with a fortune estimated at around $58 billion, has already faced the ignominy of having the world's biggest-ever IPO ($35 billion) spiked by Chinese regulators days before its launch.

The November share sale was set to see his wealth bulge to more than $70 billion in a record-breaking listing of the group's Ant Group financial arm in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

But Chinese regulators abruptly pulled the deal, over what initially appeared to be concerns about the company's reach into the finances of hundreds of millions of Chinese people. It was a brutal public rebuke to Ma. And then on Thursday last week, the government announced an anti-monopoly probe into Alibaba.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sems to have personally driven the consensus to act against the Ant IPO. "Only he could have made the decision," an unnamed sourced told *Nikkei Asia* in Nov. "Nobody else would have the authority to do so."

And now, Chinese regulators have ordered Ant Group, the world's largest financial technology company, to rectify its businesses and comply with regulatory requirements amid increased scrutiny of anti-monopoly practices in the country's internet sector.

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, summoned Ant executives on Saturday and ordered them to formulate a rectification plan. *Agencies*

EXPRESS READ

Niger holds historic polls despite attacks

Voters went to the polls in Niger on Sunday for an election that could seal a first peaceful handover between elected presidents, against the backdrop of a bloody jihadist insurgency. The West African country, unstable since gaining independence from France 60 years ago, is ranked the world's poorest country according to the UN's Human Development Index. Around 7.4 million people are registered to vote for the ballot for presidency, which coincides with legislative elections.

Cameroon bus mishap kills 37

At least 37 people including 10 women and four children were killed when their bus hit a lorry in central Cameroon, police said on Sunday. Nineteen other passengers were injured on the bus, which was found in a ravine, Ndikinimeki police commissioner Moantsouog Mempou Paulin said. The bus hit a lorry coming in the opposite direction, he said, confirming the death toll. The passengers were returning to the capital Yaounde after Christmas, Manfred Missimikin of NGO Securoute said.

EASTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF A.P.LTD
Corporate Office, P&T Colony, Seethammadhara, Visakhapatnam-13.
"e - Procurement Short Tender Notice"
Tenders are invited from APEPDCL registered vendors for supply of HG Fuse sets, Distribution boxes, 11KV Metal parts, 11KV Guy Insulators, GI Stay wire, 3-Ph PT's, Cables, Laptops & AMC for ISMS in IT systems in EPDCL through e-Procurement.
For further details please visit **www.apeprocurement.gov.in**
Phone No.: 0891-2582302/3/4, Email: cgm_pmm@apeasternpower.com
Advt-84 **Chief General Manager (P&MM)**

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to informed to the General Public that, our client **SRI.B.SHANMUGA SRINIVAS** S/o Sri.B.Shankar Nidu, filed complaint on dated 21/11/2020 for lost the Gift Deed dated 01-04-2015 registered as Document No.INR-1-00028-2015-16, Stored in CD No.INRD139, Dated 01-04-2015, in respect of the schedule properties involved in the said Registered gift deed, and when he was travelling the bus, the said original Registered Gift deed of him which is in the custody of our client has lost. And our client has lodged complaint before the jurisdictional Vartur Police station with regard to the same, therefore It is informed to the General Public, that if anybody has made any of the transaction with regard the schedule properties of the above said registered gift deed Dated 01-04-2015. Is not valid and except our client nobody has right over the same, and if any of the transactions made in respect of the gift deed schedule properties, our client has not responsible of the same.
MANJUNATHA.H, Advocate
AKSHAY LAW ASSOCIATES
Offi: No.159, 2nd Floor,
Opp. Pooja Complex, Old Madras Road,
K.R.Puram, Bengaluru-560 036. Dt. 26-12-2020

IN THE COURT OF THE XII ADDL. CHIEF METROPOLITAN MAGISTRATE AT BANGALORE
Crl. Mis. No. 4831 /2020
Between: Smt. SELVESHWARI, W/o. V. Sundarrajan, D/o. Late. M. Narasimha Reddy, Aged about 55 years, R/at. No.487, New No.37, 8th Main, 4th A Cross, RPC Layout Vijaynagar 2nd Stage, Bangalore-560 040. :PETITIONER
And: The Registrar of Births & Deaths, Commissioner of BBMP, Bangalore. :RESPONDENT
PAPER PUBLICATION
Whereas, the petitioner has filed the above petition U/s. 13(3) of the birth and death acts seeking direction to the commissioner Bangalore to register the death of the deceased is sister of the petitioner by name N. PUSHPA BAI, D/o. LATE. M. NARASIMHA REDDY, was died on 09-05-2017 at above mentioned address and issue the direction accordingly for the death certificate to produce the concerned authority.
If any person interested in the matter may appear before the Hon'ble court either personally or through an advocate duly instructed on 05-01-2021 at 11.00 am., otherwise the matter will be heard and decided as ex-parte.
Given under my hand and the seal of the court dated 10th day of December 2020.
By Order of the Court
Sd/- Sheristedar, XII ACMM Court, Bengaluru
Advocate for Petitioner : HEMAVATHI.H.S.
MANGALA ASHOK. M.R & S.N.ASSOCIATES, Advocates, No.398, 8th Main, ITI Layout, Mallathahalli, Bangalore-560 056.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby informed to the public that my client intends to purchase the Schedule Property from Sri. Mohan Kumar S/o.Govindaraju residing at 12th Main Road, 3rd Phase, J.P. Nagar, Bangalore-560078. its lawful owner as recorded in the public records. Any Person/s or financial institution/s of bank/s etc., having/asserting any right, title, interest of the schedule property in any manner may file objections to the undersigned within **'TEN DAYS'** from the date of this publication of notice hereof with Document proof, failing which, my client will proceed to conclude the sale transaction with the said person in respect of the Schedule property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of the immovable Property bearing Site No.B-6, carved out of and situated at survey No.4/1, Sarakki Kere, Gowri's Layout,Bangalore measuring East to West 30 Feet and North to South 40 Feet and bounded by East: Vengamaraju's Property No.4/2, West: Road, North: Remaining Property, South: Govindaraju's Property.
Sd/- **Smt. Latha.G**, Advocate,
#3/1, 4th Cross, K.V. Lane, Akkipet,
Bangalore-560053.
Place: Bangalore Date: 27/12/2020

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TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD.
Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)

Sl. No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No.	Due Date & time for Submission
1	CE/Mechanical/Coal	Coal (Ship) – 72 One Self Trimming Panamax Gearless/Geared (Offered as Gearless) Vessel with the Lay days From 25th Feb. 2021 to 11th March 2021	27.01.2021 upto 14.00 Hours

The tender Specification can be downloaded from TANGEDCO Website, **www.tangedco.gov.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, at free of cost . Tender will be opened through the NIC Portal https:tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app**
DIPR/4966/Tender/2020 CHIEF ENGINEER/MECHANICAL/COAL

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AYURVEDA
(Deemed To Be University Under *de-novo* Category)
(Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India)
Jorawar Singh Gate, Amer Road, Jaipur-302002 (Rajasthan)
Counselling-Registration Notice for Admission to M.D / M.S (Ayurveda) Course Session 2020-21
Online Registration Applications are invited from 29.12.2020 to 04.01.2021 on Website **niajaipur.in** for admission to M.D / M.S (Ayurveda) Courses Session 2020-21 in National Institute of Ayurveda (Deemed to be University under *de-novo* category) from AIAPGET-2020 qualified candidates for the Quota reserved for BAMS passed out candidates of National Institute of Ayurveda, University of Rajasthan, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurved University, Jodhpur and also from In-Service Candidates working in Rajasthan Govt. Service or any State Govt. Registration Fee and all other details are available in the Counselling Board Website **niajaipur.in**. Please visit the website regularly for any information/updates.
Dated: 26-12-2020 **PROF. SANJEEV SHARMA DIRECTOR**

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-1, BENGALURU
No. 4, 2nd Floor, LIC Jeevan Mangal Building Residency Road, Bengaluru- 560025.
Form No 14 (See regulation 33 (2))
DRC No:432/2019
Union Bank of India, Gandhinagar Branch, Sevakshetra, No. 14, Ground Floor, 1 Main Road, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru- 560 009. **....Certificate Holder**
Versus
M/s. Shiva Industries & Another **....Certified Debtor(s)**
To
DEMAND NOTICE
1. M/s. Shiva Industries, No. 119/7, Nayanappanahalli, Near Rhyolite Apartment, Begur Post, Bengaluru - 560 068, Represented by its Proprietor: Sri M. Sadashiva.
2. Sri M Sadashiva, S/o. Sri Basavaraj M. R/at: No. 30, 2nd Cross, Someshwara Layout, Hulimavu, Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru - 560 076.
In view of the Recovery Certificate issued in **O.A. 1198/2017** passed by the Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal, Bengaluru on 28.05.2019 an amount of **Rs.20,35,642/-** (Rupees Twenty Lakhs Thirty Five Thousand Six Hundred and Forty Two Only) is due against you along with interest and costs from date of filing of OA.s till realization.
You are hereby called upon to deposit the above sum within 15 days of the receipt if the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made as per rules.
In additions to the sum aforesaid you will be liable to pay.
a)Such interest as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the execution proceedings.
b)All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and other process that may be taken for recovering the amount due.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on **17.07.2019**
Sd/- (DEEPA INDUVANI S.)
Recovery Officer-II , DRT-1 Bengaluru
Note: Attention is invited to Rule 16 of the Second Schedule of the Income Tax Act 1961 read with Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 which is reproduced below:
"Rule 16 (1) Where a notice has been served on a defaulter under Rule 2, the defaulter or his representative or his representative in interest shall not be competent to mortgage, charge, lease or otherwise deal with any property belonging to him except with the permission of the Debt Recovery Officer, nor shall any Civil Court issue any process against such property in execution of a decree for the payment of money.
(2) Where an attachment has been made under this Schedule any private transfer or delivery of the property attached or of any interest therein and any payment to the defaulter of any debt, dividend or other monies contrary to such attachment, shall be void, as against all claims enforceable under the attachment".

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II
BID NOTICE NO. TNRSP II/EPC15/2020-21/01 dated: 26.12.2020
1. The Superintending Engineer (H), TNRSP II for and on behalf of Governor of State of Tamil Nadu invites bids for **"EPC15-Strengthening and Widening (Four Lane) of Tirunelveli – Sengottai – Kollam Road of SH-39 from Km 27+700 to Km 50+600 (package II)".**
2. Kindly refer the Invitation For Bid (IFB) uploaded in **www.tntenders.gov.in** for details **from 28.12.2020 at 15.00 hours.**
3. The bid document will be available **from 28.12.2020 at 15.00 hours** and should be submitted online in the website, **www.tntenders.gov.in.**
4. Pre-bid meeting will be held **on 06.01.2021 at 11.00 hours** through online (refer bidding document for additional information).
5. Deadline for online submission of bids: **on or before 11.00 hours (IST) on 29.01.2021.**
6. Date of online Bid opening: **at 11.45 hours (IST) on 29.01.2021.**
Superintending Engineer (H), (For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)
Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project II, Chennai-28. TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavaperumal Puram, Off Greenways Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai- 600 028. Tamil Nadu, India. Telephone No: +91 44 24951072
Fax: +91 44 24952414 / Email: tnrsp1@gmail.com/ Website: www.tnrsp.gov.in
DIPR/4990/TENDER/2020

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II
BID NOTICE NO. TNRSP II/EPC14/2020-21/01 dated: 24.12.2020
1. The Superintending Engineer (H), TNRSP II, Chennai for and on behalf of Governor of State of Tamil Nadu invites bids for **"EPC14-Strengthening and Widening (Four Lane) of Tirunelveli – Sengottai – Kollam Road of SH-39 Km 5+000 to Km 27+700 (Package I)".**
2. Kindly refer the Invitation For Bid (IFB) uploaded in www.tntenders.gov.in for details **from 28.12.2020 at 15.00 hours.**
3. The bid document will be available **from 28.12.2020 at 15.00 hours** and should be submitted online in the website, www.tntenders.gov.in.
4. Pre-bid meeting will be **held on 06.01.2021 at 11.00 hours** through online (refer bidding document for additional information).
5. Deadline for online submission of bids: **on or before 11.00 hours (IST) on 29.01.2021.**
6. Date of online Bid opening: **at 11.30 hours (IST) on 29.01.2021**
Superintending Engineer (H), (For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)
Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project II, Chennai-28. TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavaperumal Puram, Off Greenways Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai- 600 028. Tamil Nadu, India. Telephone No: +91 44 24951072
Fax: +91 44 24952414 / Email: tnrsp1@gmail.com/ Website: www.tnrsp.gov.in
DIPR/4990/TENDER/2020

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PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given in accordance with the provisions of Section 72 of the Indian Partnership Act, 1932 that:
The partnership heretofore existing between
1) Dr. PRASHANT SAJJAN, Aged about 42 years, S/o Shivaraj Sajjan Residing at # 47, SLS Spencer Horamavu, Agara, Bengaluru – 560013; and
2) Dr. KRISHNA D GONAL, Aged about 29 years, S/o Dyamanna Gonal, Residing at # 29, Ground floor,3rd Main, 12th Cross,Hoysala Nagar, Ramamurthy Nagar, Bengaluru – 560016; and
3) Dr. MITHUN CHAKRAVARTI PATIL, Aged about 27 years, S/o Patil Srinivas Goud, residing at # 4-42 B C Colony, Vidapanakal Pathur, Ananthapuram, Andhrapradesh – 515870; under the name and style of "PURPLE PATCH HOSPITAL" at No.72/1,Thanisandra Main Road, Thanisandra Village K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bengaluru - 560077, is now dissolved by mutual consent as from **26th day of December' 2020.**
That **Dr.MITHUN CHAKRAVARTI PATIL,** will conduct said business hereafter, has assumed all the outstanding obligations of said business incurred both heretofore and hereafter, and is entitled to all of the assets of said business.
Said partnership is dissolved as of **26th December 2020.**
Sd/- Dr. PRASHANT SAJJAN
Sd/- Dr. KRISHNA D GONAL
Sd/- Dr.MITHUN CHAKRAVARTI PATIL
Sd/- Shivakumar, Advocate
No.483, F Block, Sahakaranagar, Bengaluru-560092.
Mobile : 9731000789

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to notify, for the general information of the public that, my clients **Surendra H.** S/o Late Huchamayai Gowda & **Smt. Pavitra Bai.S** w/o Surendra.H, both are R/o # 467, 4th Cross, 2nd Stage, Bhavaninagar, Railway Badavane, Ullalu, Bangalore-560056, are instructed to me, regarding, they have entered into Sale Agreement with its lawful owner V.Nagaraja S/o. Venkatachalappa, through registered document No.SRI-1-03645/2020-21, C.D. No. SRID704, Book-I, dated 11-12-2020, registered in the office of SRO Sriramapura Bangalore, in respect of the schedule property.
Any person, or Group of Persons, or institutions, having an interest or any Right, Title. Charge, Lien and Minor claims, whatsoever on the schedule property may lodge his/her and their/its claim to the undersigned with documentary proof within a period of **15 days** from the date of this publication, failing which, it will be presumed that, here are no objections / Claims, disputes in respect of the schedule property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of the Residential Property bearing **Site No.1058** formed in residentially converted land in survey No. 28/1, vide official memorandum bearing No. B.Dis.ALN/ES (S)19/2003-04, dated 08-12-2003, issued by the Deputy Commissioner Bangalore District Bangalore situated at **Gidadakonenahalli Village Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk Bangalore District** called as **"UPKAR RESIDENCY"** now coming under the Administrative jurisdiction of BBMP, Herohalli Ward No. 72, measuring East to West: 40 ft., North to South: 30 ft., total measuring **1200 sft.,** consisting of Ground Floor First Floor and Second Floor constructed with Mosaic Floor and RCC Roof of 36 squares building having all civic amenities and bounded on the:
East by : Site No.1069,
West by : Road,
North by : Site No.1057,
South by : Site No.1059.
SHESHAPPAGOUDA PATIL, Advocate
R.R. Nagar, Bangalore-560098,
Mobile No. : 9480117041,

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to bring to the kind notice of the General public that my client **Arjun S Meda,** Son of Sri. M.S Shiva Shankar, aged about 35 years, residing at No.C-157, 1st Main Road. Robertson Block. Ramachandra puram, Bangalore-560 021 is negotiating with the said owner **Sunanda D,** Wife of Sri. V Sheshadri. aged about 46 years, residing at No.43. 2nd Main, 4th Cross. R.K.Layout, Padmanabhanagar, Banashankari 2nd Stage, Bangalore -560 070 for the purchase of site No.801, carved out of Sy.No.144 in the layout known as "CONCORDE NAPA VALLEY", Katha No.290/801, situated at Tharalu Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, for a valuable sale consideration and if any person/s is having any objection for the said transaction please contact my client or his advocate with documents within 7 days from the date of this publication or else the transaction will concluded by getting the sale deed executed in favour of my client and the objections received later than 7 days will not be entertained. Which please note.
SCHEDULE : All that piece and parcel of property bearing residential site No.801, carved out of Sy.No.144 in the layout known as "CONCORDE NAPA VALLEY", Katha No.290/801, measuring East to West : 12 Meters and North to South : 09 Meters totally measuring 108 square meters or 1162.50 square feets situated at Tharalu Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk and bounded on EAST BY : Site No.787, WEST BY : Road, NORTH BY : Site No.802, and SOUTH BY : Site No.800.
S.N. MADHU
ADVOCATE NO.94/IA, 2ND A CROSS, 3RD PHASE 6TH BLOCK, 3RD STAGE, BSK, KATHRIGUPPE NEAR AYAPPA TEMPLE, BANGALORE-560085
PLACE:BANGALORE.
DATE : 24.12.2020

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LIC HFL
LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD
LIC HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
15/1, Hayes Centre, Hayes Road, Bangalore -560025.Ph.: 080-43003651.
DEMAND NOTICE
NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SEC 13 (2) OF "THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.
The following persons whose names are mentioned in Col No.1, The details of properties mortgaged are shown in Col No.2. The borrower have defaulted in repaying the amounts due by them as shown in Col. No.3, in spite of repeated remainders, consequently these dues have been classified as NPA's as per RBI's guidelines . Notices were sent by Regd. Post to below mentioned date and that is returned / undelivered. Therefore the respective borrowers are hereby called upon to repay the outstanding amounts due mentioned against their names in Col No.3 within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which LIC Housing Finance Ltd., would be constrained to initiate proceedings under sec.13 (4) of SARFAESI Act against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereunder against the respective loan A/cs to realize the amounts due to them.

Sl. No.	NAME OF THE BORRROWER & LOAN NO	DEMAND NOTICE DATE	NOTICE AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERY
1	Name:- **Mr. Srinivasalu J & Loan No. 411900014006**	20.03.2020	**82,01,042.63**	All that piece & parcel of the immovable property being residential apartment bearing No. 004(West facing) located on ground floor measuring 1295 square feet of super built up area consisting of hall , kitchen cum dining , one utility, three bedrooms with one attached bathroom , one common bathroom constructed with RCC roofed, vitrified flooring, aluminium windows doors are jungle wood and main doors with solid teak wood and provided with one exclusive covered car parking space in stilt floor bearing slot no. 004 together with proportionate share in common area as lobbies, lift, corridor, staircase , etc., to the apartment in the building known as "J.C. Heights " East By : Road, west by : Corridor, north by : Flat no. 003, south by : Private property along with 313 sq ft of undivided right , title and interest in the property built on the land measuring 07 Guntas Out Of 22 Guntas In Sy No. 169/5, Land Measuring 02 Guntas Out Of 10 Guntas In Sy No 169/6 And Land Measuring 03 Guntas Out Of 10 Gunats In Sy No 169/6 And Land Measuring 03 Guntas Out Of 14 Guntas In Sy No 168/5 all the lands are adjacent to each other and totally measuring 12 Guntas out of 48 guntas of Kodigehalli Village , Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North taluk (duly converted from Agricultural to non agricultural residential purpose by deputy Commissioner Bangalore District , vide Official Memorandum No. ALN(N.A.Y)S.R.-131/2012-13 AND ALN (N.A.Y)SR-132/2012-13, dated :30.02.2013 respectively) presently the property is within the administrative jurisdiction Of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike WARD No. 09 of Vidyaranyapura and has assigned New BBMP No. 61/169/5/169/6/168/5 situated At Kodigehalli Village , Vidyaranyapura , Bangalore Measuring East To West : 85.98 Feet And North To South :152 Feet In All Measuring 13068 Square Feet And Bounded On The East B : Road, Wet By : Private Property, North By : K. Ganesh Property AND SOUTH BY : K . Narayana's Property
2	Name:- **Mr. Naveed Shariff Loan No. 990300000425**	**30.11.2019**	**1,35,59,608.53**	All that piece and parcel of the immovable residential property bearing Site No 17(As per newly Approved plan) assessment no 26/2-17 situated at now named as M N T LAYOUT NAGAWARA VILLAGE Kasaba Hobli Bangalore north Taluk Araic College Post Bangalore 560045 presently comes under the jurisdiction of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) New Ward No 23 Bangalore together with all rights appurtenances whatsoever whether underneath the soil or above the surface thereon and bounded as follows:- East by: Site No 20 West by:- 40 Feet Road North by:- Private Property, South by:- Site No 18,
3	**Name:- Mr. Deepak Divakar Mrs. Geetha Divakar Loan No.:- 411900012695**	**21.10.2020**	**4,41,75,477.08**	All that piece and parcel of property bearing Unit No. 26 in the Project "27 High Street" consisting of Ground Floor, First Floor, Second Floor,& Terrace Floor having four Rooms, one Hall, Kitchen, Car Garages, measuring East to West 33 Feet and North to South 39 Feet and having Super built up area along with common areas of 4468 Sq. feet, 3.67% of undivided share equivalent to 3168sft constructed out of the converted land bearing Survey No. 113/3 measuring 2 acres 22 Guntas out of which an extent of 1 acre 39 Guntas or 86314 Sq. feet situated in Nagondanahalli, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore district, Converted as per the orders of the Deputy Commissioner BEARING No. ALN (EKLW) SR.42/13-14 Dated 13-10-2013 and now within the limits of BBMP and bearing Khatha No. 597/547 and bounded on the:- East by:- Land bearing Survey No. 112, Wes by:- Land bearing Survey No. 113/1 and 4, North by:- Remaining portion of the land bearing Survey No. 113/3 and Road, South by:- Land bearing Survey No. 113/4. Villa boundries:- East by:-Podium Road. West by:- Sy no 113/1 and 4 North by:- Villa no 27 South by:- Villa no 25
4	**Name:- Mr. Girish K & Ms. Sandhya G, Guarantor Mr. Devaiah Kp Loan No.:- 411900010356**	**13.01.2020**	**1,00,29,185.22**	**Schedule A Property** All that piece and parcel of the residential property BDA Site No.525, Block No.1, in the layout by the BDA at Matadahalli Extension, Bangalore, presently coming under the jurisdiction of BBMP and bearing BBMP No.525 PID No.97-1-525 situated at 1st Block, R.T.Nagar, Matadahalli, Bangalore-32 measuring East to West 9.14mtrs and North to South 15.24 mtrs with residential building consisting of Ground floor measuring 11 squares and First floor measuring 11 squares of RCC roof, mosaic flooring, jungle wood doors and windows with all civic facilities, is bounded on the : East by: Site No 524, West by: Site No.526 North by: Road South by: Site No.536 **Schedule B Property** The Entire first floor premises having a super built up area of 11 squares constructed in the Schedule "A" Property presently bearing NEW MUNICIPAL NO 525,PID NO. 97-1-525, R.T. Nagar, 1st Block, Bangalore Ward No.97, New Ward No.46,New PID No.034-W0112-9 together with Half (1/2) undivided share in the schedule "A" Property which is equivalent to 750 sqft (Rear Back) with proportionate share in all common areas, lobbies, stair-case, and all other amenities and facilities with rights to pass through all the common passage and free for egress and ingress at all times The said premises is of RCC roof, mosaic flooring with steel windows , along with all the amenities, common facilities, common areas, and rights provided therein.
5	**Name:- Mr. Venugopal P & Ms. Soumya.P, Loan No. 410700002412**	**29.06.2019**	**23,84,123.77**	All that piece & parcel of the Residential immovable property bearing Vacant Site No. SC-10, Present BBMP Khata No. 820/SC/10, in II Layout, Block No. 1, formed in Converted Sy. Nos. 11/1, 11/2, 11/3A, 11/3B, 12/1, 12/2 & 14 (duly converted from agricultural to non-agricultural residential purposes, vide order Nos. B.DIS/ALN/SR(S)252/92-93, Dated: 02/01/1993 and No. B.DIS/ALN/SR(S)165/92-93, Dated: 08/06/1994, issued by Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore) of Lingadheeranahalli Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, situated in Pavamanapura Layout, presently coming under the jurisdiction of Bruhath Bangalore MahanagaraPalike, Hemmigepura Ward No. 198, and measuring East to West:- 40 Feet, North to South:- 24.4 Feet, totally measuring 976 Sq feet, and the schedule property bounded on: EAST By: Road, West By: Site No. SC-6, North By: Site No. 77, South By: Nala (Drainage).
6	**Name:- MR. BALACHANDAR KRISHNASAMY, GPA Holder:- Mr. N SOMASUNDARAM Loan No.:- 412100002076**	26.11.2019	3,80,05,302.65	All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing house list Nos. 5 & 6, in No. 44/2 and 44/3, Khatha No.30, situated at Sarakki Village, Uttarahalli, Bangalore South Taluk, As per present BBMP records the description of the property has been mentioned and recorded as New Municipal No. 027(Old No.5/6) situated at 3rd Main Road, Sarakki Village, Bangalore Ward No.57 of Bangalore Mahanagara Palike and its PID No.57-241-027 Measuring East to West : 49'-0 feet, North to South : 46+50/2 feet,Totally measuring 2352 Square feet, and bounded on the:-East by : Private Property; West by : 20' feet Road; North by :S. Chandra's property; South by : Private Property.

Place: Bangalore, Date: 21/12/2020 **Sd/- Authorized Officer.**

₹60,094 cr Total amount pumped in by foreign portfolio investors into the Indian markets between December 1-24, according to depository data

STOCK MARKETS MOVE IN CYCLES AND INVESTORS HAVE TO RIDE THROUGH MANY

EQUITY INVESTING NEEDS YOUR 'STAYING' POWER IN 2021

RAJAS KELKAR

IT is the last column of the year. Emotions run high as we look forward to a New Year in a sombre mood. Strange that we have to say that we are pleased to see the year go.

Shaktikanta Das, Governor of Reserve Bank of India, wrote this in his comments published in the latest RBI bulletin:

When the definitive history of this pandemic period is written up, the year 2020 will be recorded as a defining year in the history of modern civilisation, marked by the Great Pandemic, comparable in its scale to the Spanish Flu of 1918, and exceeding the economic losses of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

It took years for the world economy to recover from previous pandemics and depressions. Stock markets are at a record high around the world. That is despite low economic growth prospects for most parts of the globe in 2021.

"Yes, equity valuations are high, but we believe high valuations are deserved," argues JP Morgan's private banking commentary on the outlook for 2021. The theory pins hope on the central banks that take an 'accommodative' credit policy stance and keep interest rates low. "Stocks are likely to outperform fixed income and cash in 2021 generally," said the top banking institution's analysis.

In India, lead indicators like property registrations, people mobility, and GST collections of the central government show that the Indian economy is recovering.

India's benchmark stock exchange indices like the Sensex and the NSE Nifty are up around 10 per cent for the calendar year 2020. From the depths of March 2020, these indices have jumped 70-80 per cent. A lot of recent jump in the share prices, of over 30 per cent, is due to significant foreign portfolio flows of nearly $10 billion, according to data for the quarter ended December 2020. This surge is despite a considerable selloff by domestic institutional investors. Mutual funds have been net sellers in equity markets for a long time now.

Why are mutual funds selling

The high voltage campaign by the mutual fund industry had an impact over the past few years. Individuals subscribed for systematic investment plans across funds. People decided to deploy savings into equity-linked funds. That was perhaps the money they needed for relatively short-term goals. As soon as the stock market witnessed a slump, panic set in. Many investors have pulled out cash from equity-linked assets. That is mostly to meet expenses due to loss of income.

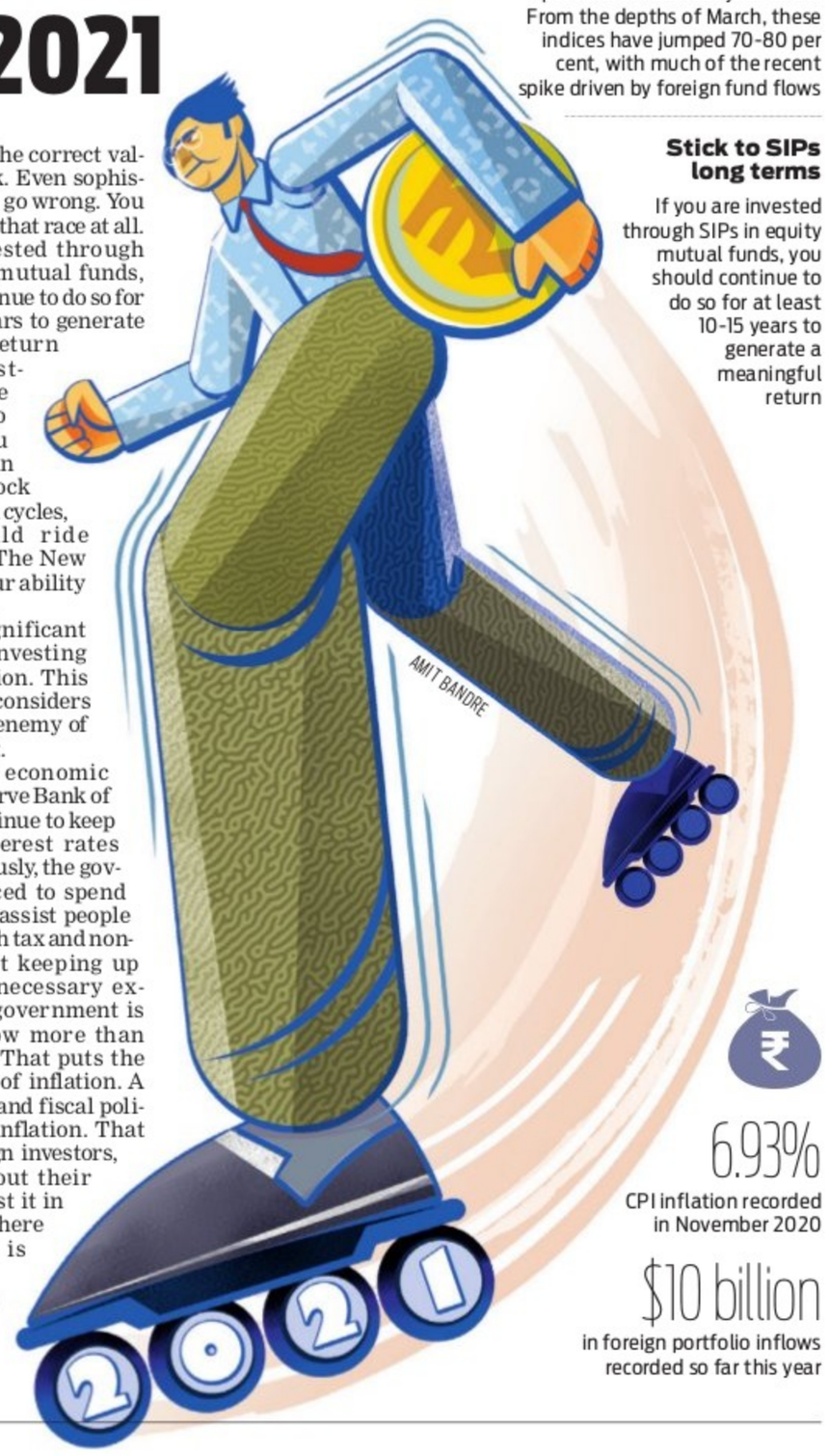
Equity investing is for the long-term. You cannot put the money you need for goals like a car or international travel in equity assets. If you find yourself in that situation, you may want to speak to a financial advisor. Ensure you put your hard-earned savings to work in a way that they help you channelise them in the direction of your goals.

Your game plan for 2021 should be to look at equity assets as an opportunity and not a threat. Identifying the right companies and the correct value is a tough ask. Even sophisticated investors go wrong. You should not enter that race at all. If you are invested through SIPs in equity mutual funds, you should continue to do so for at least 10-15 years to generate a meaningful return on your investment. Align these investments to those goals you would achieve in that period. Stock markets move in cycles, and you would ride through many. The New Year will test your ability to stay invested.

The most significant risk to equity investing in 2021 is inflation. This column always considers inflation as the enemy of your investment.

To stimulate economic growth, the Reserve Bank of India could continue to keep benchmark interest rates low. Simultaneously, the government is forced to spend more money to assist people in difficulty. With tax and non-tax revenue not keeping up pace with the necessary expenditure, the government is forced to borrow more than was estimated. That puts the economy at risk of inflation. A loose monetary and fiscal policy means high inflation. That can spook foreign investors, who may pull out their money and invest it in other markets where high inflation is not a risk.

(The writer is editor-in-chief, www.moneyminute.in)



Foreign inflows have pushed markets up

India's benchmark stock exchange indices like the Sensex and the NSE Nifty have risen around 10 per cent in calendar year 2020. From the depths of March, these indices have jumped 70-80 per cent, with much of the recent spike driven by foreign fund flows

Stick to SIPs long terms

If you are invested through SIPs in equity mutual funds, you should continue to do so for at least 10-15 years to generate a meaningful return

6.93%
CPI inflation recorded in November 2020

$10 billion
in foreign portfolio inflows recorded so far this year

MONEY-WISE

A REVIEW OF THE YEAR GONE BY

ASHOK KUMAR

PART-I

ON being asked, I suggested to a well known Editor of a business television channel that just like the Cricket telecasts shared statistics of the last five innings or games of a batsman when he walked to the crease to bat, his channel too could provide the accuracy percentage of the last five market or stock calls made by the 'expert' guest whenever they featured on a show. For obvious reasons, the idea did not find favour.

I, for one though, am quite willing to have my calls during the entire year scrutinized, and hence, over this part and the next, I shall share excerpts from this column in 2020.

On January 6, 2020, I said here that "on the equities front, the indices in 2019 were largely fuelled by less than a dozen high weightage index stocks, while most stocks, particularly those from mid- and small-cap categories, took a hammering. The consensus seems to be that the rebound will come from these segments, but I believe they will still take some more time to recover. However, this would still be a good year for serious equity investors to accumulate quality stocks and bide their time as part of their longer term investment cycle."

On March 16, 2020, I said here: "So, where will the Indian equity market head from here? I won't duck that question and will stick my neck out even at the risk of ending up with egg all over my face. After all, the forecast hinges on the duration of the malevolent effect of the coronavirus. If I had an investment time frame of at least 30-36 months or more, I would bite the bullet and stay invested in equities and if my budget permitted it, start or top-up SIPs or STPs in mid- and small-cap funds that can deliver sharp returns when the market reverses and trends upwards again."

And on May 11, I said, "In the last week of March 2020, when the equity market indices were falling like ninepins, my team convinced me to shoot a brief five-minute video that was shared exclusively with our investors. The primary objectives were to sooth frayed nerves and provide reasons to not just stay the course with quality existing investments but also buying aggressively via SIP or STP into the funds curated by our team based on the life-cycle stage of investors.

"Most of our investors took the cue. Coincidentally perhaps, from the very next day, the BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty commenced its bounce back and April turned out to be the best month for equity indices since 2009. But did it also mean that it was time to sell and await the next correction to reinvest? Perhaps so, if one is a trader or has achieved a near-term goal. For the rest, our message remained: Stay Invested, Stay Patient. There is adequate anecdotal evidence to suggest that patience is the key to wealth creation."

(Ashok Kumar heads LKW India and can be reached at œolotus@hotmail.com)

New transaction norms come into play from Jan 1

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
@ New Delhi

PLANNING to pay more than ₹50,000 by cheque or doing payments via third parties? Come January 1, there will be a few changes in rules that you need to keep in mind to ensure a smooth transaction.

In order to check fraudulent transactions, the Reserve Bank of India has decided to introduce a new mechanism called the 'positive pay system' for cheque transactions. This regime is set to come into effect from January 1, 2021.

Under the scheme, if you are making payments beyond ₹50,000, you will have to re-confirm key details such as date of issue, name of the beneficiary, payee, and the amount involved to the drawee bank. These details will be cross-checked before the cheque is presented for payment. In case any discrepancy is flagged by the cheque truncation system (CTS) to the drawee and presenting banks, redressal measures would be undertaken. While availing this facility would be at the discretion of the account holder, banks may make it mandatory for cheques of ₹5 lakh and above, the central bank said.

Another change is that when you make an UPI transaction on a third party service provider like Google Pay, you may be required to pay additional charges. The National Payments Council of India (NPCI) has reportedly decided to impose an additional charge on UPI payment services, for third party app providers from January 1, 2021.

Meanwhile, the RBI has already announced enhanced limits for contactless card payments and e-mandates on cards (and UPI) for recurring transactions from ₹2,000 to ₹5,000. This also becomes effective from January 1, 2021.

Sebi, for its part, has introduced detailed guidelines for determining the risk factor in mutual funds for retail investors via a new risk-o-meter tool. The new system comes after the Franklin Templeton fiasco and introduces a fresh category of 'very high' risk instruments, replacing the old model which was based simply on a scheme's declared category without adequately considering its actual portfolio. The new system becomes effective January 1.

Another change that investors have to deal with from the new year is that when they invest in a mutual fund, for instance, they will receive the purchase Net Asset Value of the day when their money actually reaches the asset management company, irrespective of

the size of the investments.

"It has been decided that in respect of purchase of units of mutual fund schemes (except liquid and overnight schemes), closing NAV of the day shall be applicable on which the funds are available for utilization irrespective of the size and time of receipt of such application," Sebi has said.

Meanwhile, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) has directed all life insurance companies to provide a standard individual term life insurance policy from January 1, 2020. Apart from the benefits and riders stated in the Annexure, no others are to be offered. There will also be no exclusions under the product other than the suicide exclusion.

Sovereign Gold Bond IX a long-term investment option

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
@ New Delhi

ON Saturday, the Reserve Bank of India announced the issue price for Series IX of Sovereign Gold Bonds, fixing the price at ₹5,000 per gm of gold. The issue will be open for subscription from Monday to January 1, with a Settlement date of January 5, 2021. For investors who buy digitally, the issue price of Gold Bond will be ₹4,950 per gram of gold.

Before you wonder whether you should invest in this round or not, it is useful to first gain an understanding of what Sovereign Gold Bonds are.

SGBs are issued by the government at regular intervals at the prevailing gold price. The value of the bond is based on the simple average closing price as published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association Ltd for gold of 999 purity. This average is for the last three business days of the week preceding the subscription period.

The scheme was first launched in November 2015 with an objective to reduce the demand for physical gold and

shift a part of domestic savings—used for purchase of gold—into financial savings.

The minimum permissible investment is 1 gram of gold and the maximum limit of subscription shall be 4 kg for individuals and HUFs, and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities for one fiscal year. The bonds are sold through banks, the Stock Holding Corporation of India, designated post offices, and stock exchanges.

These gold bonds have a fixed tenure of eight years and a lock-in period of five years. Investors get an interest of 2.5 per cent annually, which will be paid semi-annually and it is taxable. But if you hold SGBs till maturity, there will be no capital gain tax on the investment. Experts claim that this is an excellent alternative to investing in physical Gold, if you are doing so for the long term. There is no risk of theft and when you sell, you get the current market price. While buying, you also do not have to worry about making extra charges or purity-levels. Another advantage is that investors get interest on the investment compared to a fund management fee of 1.25 per cent for the gold savings fund or gold ETFs.

For an average investor, analysts note that it is prudent to maintain at least 10-15 per cent of their portfolio invested in the yellow metal.

EXPRESS READ

Over 4.15 cr ITRs for FY20 filed

New Delhi: Over 4.15 crore taxpayers have already filed their income tax returns (ITR) for assessment year 2020-21 till December 26, the I-T Department said on Sunday. The deadline for individual taxpayers ends December 31.

₹4.34 lakh cr cost overruns recorded

New Delhi: As many as 442 infrastructure projects, each worth ₹150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns of over ₹4.34 lakh crore, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in its latest bulletin in infra projects.

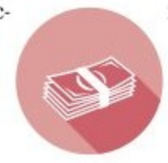
New law change likely to result in employers tweaking salary structure

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
@ Bengaluru

WITH the parliament giving its nod to the Code on Wages Bill last year, the resulting in amendments in rules related to wages and bonuses is likely to push companies to restructure salary structures. According to experts, these changes may result in employees receiving lesser take home salaries from the next fiscal year (April 1, 2021).

Experts note that the new rules will result in a change in salary slips, in cash-in-hand, gratuities and provident fund (PF) payments, and even the balance sheets of private firms. The new rules state that the allowance part of the salary should be capped at 50 per cent. On the other hand, the basic pay should be 50 per cent or more. Conventionally, companies keep the allowance component of salaries higher which, results in more in-hand salaries to employees.

However, the new wage codes are aimed at increasing the contribution to avenues such as PF and gratuity, which might also impact the liabilities of employer firms. Under the current structure, basic salary averages arounf 30-40% of total salary which in turn determines the gratuities, and PF received.



According to the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, gratuity is calculated as 4.81 per cent of the basic pay. Most firms with a workforce of 10 or more employees come under the Act. This is often payable to those employees who have completed a tenure of 5 years or more at the firm.

Employees Provident Fund (EPF), on the other hand constitutes a minimum 12 per cent of the basic salary, which can be withdrawn after at least a month from termination from the service or upon retirement. Basic salary is determined based on the designation of the employee and the industry in which he or she works in. Most of the other components, like allowances, are based on the basic salary. This amount is fully taxable. Allowances, meanwhile, will be payable to employees during the course of their service and can be fully or partially taxable depending on their nature. This allowance component, such as for house rent, conveyance, and other expenses, is usually determined based on each company's particular policies.

Domestic auto sales, updates on virus strain to drive stock markets

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
@ New Delhi

DOMESTIC automobile sales reports and major global trends , such as updates on the new virus strain and progress on the vaccination front, is likely to drive domestic stock exchanges this week, according to brokerages. Experts also say that the equity markets may witness volatility due to the monthly derivative expiries.

For the week ahead, concerns regarding fresh cases of the virus will remain in the limelight along with development on Brexit deal

Vinod Nair, Geojit FS

"Going ahead, market is likely to maintain its positive momentum on the back of abundant liquidity, effective vaccine rollout and Brexit deal. The UK reached a historic trade deal with the European Union. However, emerging risk pertaining to new coronavirus strain in many parts of Europe may limit upside. The monthly F&O expiry could add to the volatility," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Britain clinched a historic deal with the European Union on Thursday after both sides managed to thrash out a post-Brexit free trade agreement (FTA) just days before the December 31 deadline.

"For the week ahead, concerns regarding fresh cases of the virus will remain in the limelight along with development on Brexit deal. Investors should stay focused on quality sectors and counters and also watch at the trend of FII inflows, which is the main factor of the recent rally. No eventful data and announcements are expected this week," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said.

Satish Kumar, Research Analyst, Choice Broking said that investors should keep a watch on the UK virus situation and progress on vaccination. During the holiday-truncated last week, the BSE Sensex rose 0.02 per cent.

Harikrishna holds Carlsen

Grandmaster P Harikrishna held World No 1 Magnus Carlsen in the fourth round of the preliminary stage of the Champions Chess Tour Airthings Masters online chess championship. Both Harikrishna and Carlsen drew all their four games on the opening day of the tournament. The game between Harikrishna and the Norwegian ended in 24 moves.

STAND-IN STANDS OUT ON DAY 2

Opting to walk in to bat at number 4, captain Ajinkya Rahane's unbeaten century hands India early advantage in Melbourne

VENKATA KRISHNA B @ Chennai

IF Day 1 saw Jasprit Bumrah and Ravichandran Ashwin step up, Day 2 was the turn of Ajinkya Rahane. The stand-in captain might not be the most popular face in the side, but over two days at the Melbourne Cricket Ground he has been the face of a turnaround that has helped India drive home some early advantage. Make no mistake, there is still plenty of work to do, but India will have reasons to believe they can actually put behind scars of Adelaide in Melbourne, provided they continue with their good work.

36-1 overnight, India needed Shubman Gill and Cheteshwar Pujara to play long. But they didn't last long on Sunday leaving a giant task for Rahane. If his field placements and using spinners highlighted his captaincy potential on Day 1, he sprung a surprise by coming in at No 4 on Day 2. In the two practice matches, well aware that the No 4 slot will open up, Rahane had batted at No 5 and even the team management believed it was the ideal spot for him as Hanuma Vihari was lined up to fill Virat Kohli's slot.

Instead, on Sunday morning he informed the team, he would walk in at No 4, a position he has batted only five times in 111 innings with an unbeaten 78 being his highest. Such decisions are a rarity among batsmen, who prefer to have a sort of comfort in a role they have become accustomed to. Here Rahane had the option to send in Vihari, who himself has batted mostly at No 3 or 4 in domestic circuit. But if there was a time for Rahane, the batsman to rise, there was never going to be anything better than this. One of Australia's best-ever attack to confront and arrest another slide.

Through the course of the day, Rahane precisely did what was expected of him. And he did so in style with some luck that was needed when conditions were suited to bowlers. It wasn't a chanceless innings, but will surely go down as one of the best played by an Indian overseas, especially considering the context. This was no means the Australian wicket which aided Rahane's stroke making. He is at his best when he is free-flowing, the bat-speed picking up as momentum builds. This was anything but that. At 63-3, he had to arrest a collapse and he did so by taking time.

A nervous starter, he didn't show anything on Saturday. He edged the fifth ball he faced, but since he played it with soft hands the slip fielder caught it after one-bounce. He took 16 balls to get off the mark, but he seldom tried hard. Nothing has come easy for Rahane. As a kid, he had to travel nearly 35 km one way on Mumbai locals to train. After establishing himself as a reliable overseas batsman in his first ever trip to SENA countries, he has even warmed the bench when they toured next. He went through a lull period, where he didn't score a Test ton for 24 months that you thought, we wouldn't discover the Rahane of old.

But here he is. After finding some form last year in the Caribbean and at home, he was there on Saturday taking India to safety with each minute he spent in the middle. The situation demanded him to tire down the Australian quicks and he did it. He shouldered arms, defended off the front-foot, didn't push outside off, even cut down going after those balls with width on offer. Australia tested him with short-balls and bouncers, but he hardly flinched. He even pulled Josh Hazlewood but never got carried away.

After Vihari departed with India still 79 short of Australia's total, Rahane let Rishabh Pant play his aggressive game, and even shifted gears every now and then. Once Pant departed, with Ravindra Jadeja in, he took control of the show. By the time Australia took the second new ball, Rahane was the one calling the shots.

Captain Ajinkya Rahane's century (104 batting) helped India take a lead of 82 runs on Day 2 of the second Test against Australia in Melbourne, on Sunday | AFP

SCOREBOARD

Australia 1st innings: 195

India 1st innings (overnight 36/1):

Gill c Paine b Cummins 45, Pujara c Paine c Cummins 17, Rahane (batting) 104, Vihari c Smith b Lyon 21, Pant c Paine b Starc 29, Jadeja (batting) 40, **Extras** (b12, lb6, w1, nb2) **21, Total** (five wickets, 91.3 ovs) **277.**

FOW: 0-1, 2-61, 3-64, 4-116, 5-173.

Bowling: Starc 18.3-3-61-2, Cummins 22-7-71-2, Hazlewood 21-6-44-0, Lyon 18-2-52-1, Green 12-1-31-0.

EXPRESS READ

Karun to lead Karnataka in Syed Mushtaq Ali T20

BENGALURU: Karun Nair will lead Karnataka in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament, starting January 10. The 20-member squad, announced by KSCA on Sunday, is for the round robin stages. Mayank Agarwal, KL Rahul and Manish Pandey are not available.

Nagal gets wildcard to play at Oz Open

CHENNAI: India's Sumit Nagal has received a wildcard to play at the Australian Open, beginning February 8. Nagal, who had entered to play in the qualifiers, got the Asia-Pacific wildcard. Divij Sharan will partner Slovakia's Igor Zelenay in the doubles competition.

Railways to conduct wrestling camp in Delhi

CHENNAI: In its bid to help wrestlers prepare for the upcoming Senior National Wrestling Championship, Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) has decided to organise a camp in New Delhi. RSPB has seeked permission and the camp could begin soon.

RAY OF HOPE

Min SOP opens door for fans in Eng series

VENKATA KRISHNA B @ Chennai

INDIA'S upcoming home series against England could possibly be played in front of spectators as the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports issued new standard operating procedures (SOP) which allows stadia to operate at 50 per cent of their capacity. But there is one roadblock. It is understood that the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is hesitant to play in front of fans. However, the BCCI has already opened negotiations with their English counterparts and remain hopeful the series will be the first international event in India that will have fans amid the pandemic.

While the final decision to allow spectators in the stadium rests with the local authorities, the BCCI is confident that securing permission from the Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra state governments won't be an issue as all three stadia have enough ventilation as per the norms.

England are scheduled to arrive in Chennai on January 26, where they will play two Test matches starting from February 5 before moving to Ahmedabad, which will host two Tests and five T20Is. Pune is set to host the three ODIs in March. It is understood that the BCCI has informed the ECB about its plans to have spectators in the stadium with an extensive proposal being discussed. As part of it, the BCCI has assured the ECB that stands next to the dressing rooms will be left empty as players' seating areas have to be out in the open. The ECB's fears are understandable as India are among the worst affected Covid nations.

Among the three venues, Ahmedabad's newly-constructed Sardar Patel Stadium has a capacity of 1,00,000 and the third Test against England will be its first. The BCCI is keen to have fans for that match at any cost, which is why it has marked it as a day/night Test. Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium, if allowed to operate at 50 per cent capacity, can accommodate around 20,000 fans.

DERBY DELIGHT FOR ARSENAL

Bukayo Saka (second left) was one of the scorers as Arsenal posted a morale-boosting win (3-1) over London rivals Chelsea in the EPL on Saturday | AP

Sunday's results: Leeds United **1-0** Burnley; West Ham United **2-2** Brighton & Hove Albion; Liverpool **1-1** West Bromwich Albion.

Kerala Blasters post first win of season

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

IT took Kerala Blasters seven games to finally taste victory as they eventually managed to get three points with a convincing 2-0 win over Hyderabad FC at the GMC Bambolim Stadium on Sunday.

It looks like Kibu Vicuna has finally managed to crack the code of finding a way to win in the ISL. After a woeful run of form, Vicuna had made five changes going into the game and two of them got on the scoresheet with Abdul Hakku (29') and Jordan Murray (88') proving to be the difference makers. Hyderabad, on the other hand, suffered their second straight defeat and they were second best against a Kerala side who dominated them in all departments. The win helped Blasters cut the gap to eighth placed Hyderabad to just three points and it could finally kick-start their campaign.

Vicuna's five changes included leaving three of their key foreign players — Gary Hooper, Costa Nhamoinesu and Bakary Kone — completely out of the matchday squad.

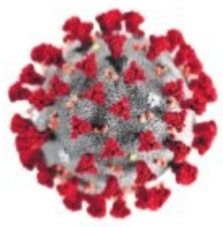
Monday's match: Bengaluru vs Jamshedpur | Live on Star Sports 2/3 at 7:30 pm

ENSURING ACCESS TO BIGGER OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS
Flagging off of
India's
100th Kisan Rail
from Sangola, Maharashtra to Shalimar, West Bengal
SALIENT FEATURES
• 100th Kisan Rail will cover distance of 2132 km within 40 hours
• Fresh farm produce like pomegranates from Sangola, oranges from Nagpur, musk melon and other produce from Jeur, Belvandi and Kopargaon will be easily transported to regions across eastern & north eastern parts of the country
KISAN RAIL: A GAME CHANGER INITIATIVE FURTHERING FARMERS' PROSPERITY
• Kisan Rail is enabling farmers from various regions to sell agricultural produce to far off markets all across the country
• 50% subsidy makes transportation of fruits and vegetables cheaper
• With access to urban markets, farmers are ensured better profit margins
• Within 3 months, 27 thousand tonnes of agricultural produce has already been transported through Kisan Rail
• Enroute halts of Kisan Rail have loading and unloading facilities that will especially benefit local produce
by
Narendra Modi
Prime Minister
(Through Video Conferencing)
In the August presence of
Narendra Singh Tomar
Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Food Processing Industries, Government of India
Piyush Goyal
Minister of Railways, Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India
28 December, 2020 at 4:30 pm
Join the event live at -
https://pmindiawebcast.nic.in/
Use #100thKisanRail to widely spread information about the work done for agricultural development and farmer welfare.
INDIAN RAILWAYS
www.indianrailways.gov.in

Andaman and Nicobar Islands did not report a single case of Covid-19 in the last 24-hours, a health department official said on Sunday. The Union Territory's Covid-19 tally remained at 4,912, the official said.

AstraZeneca shot has winning formula: CEO

UK drug manufacturer says vaccine efficacy would be equal to Pfizer-BioNTech at 95 per cent and Moderna at 94.5



HEALTH

LONDON: The Covid-19 vaccine developed by the British drugs group AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford has achieved a "winning formula" for efficacy, company's chief executive said on Sunday.

The vaccine, currently being evaluated by Britain's independent medicines regulator, provides "100 percent protection" against severe Covid disease requiring hospitalisation, Pascal Soriot said in an interview with z*Sunday Times* newspaper. He added he believes trials will show his firm has achieved a vaccine efficacy equal to Pfizer-BioNTech at 95 percent and Moderna at 94.5 percent.

"We think we have figured out the winning formula and how to get efficacy that, after two doses, is up there with everybody else," the chief executive said, while saying only that data would be published at "some point".

The UK government announced on December 23 that the developers of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine had submitted their data to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Approval is expected to be granted Monday to roll out the jab, *The Sunday Telegraph* newspaper reported. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was the first coronavirus shot to be authorised for use by the UK's independent medicines regulator and has been given to 600,000 of the country's most vulnerable people since last month. Earlier trials had shown varying outcomes in the AstraZeneca shot's efficacy. The vaccine intially showed an average 70 percent effectiveness but that level jumped to 90 percent depending on dosage.

Storm over data

Behind this average figure from large-scale trials in the UK and Brazil was a 62 percent effectiveness for those who were vaccinated with two full doses of the shot. For volunteers who received a half-dose first and then a full dose one month later, however, the vaccine was found to have 90 percent efficacy.

Soriot said he was "surprised" by the initial findings. "We would have preferred a simpler set of results," he added. The lack of clarity and transparency over the discrepancy in the results was widely criticised. Soriot said he had not expected the pushback that followed. "We assumed people would be a bit disappointed, that's for sure. But we didn't expect that storm".

Great hopes have been placed in the AstraZeneca shot, originally based on a weakened version of a chimpanzee virus, because of its low cost. AstraZeneca's vaccine also enjoys a logistical advantage over the Pfizer-BioNTech alternative, as it can be stored, transported and handled at normal refrigerated conditions of between two and eight degrees Celsius for at least six months.

That is a far cry from the -70 Celsius needed for Pfizer/BioNTech's offering.

DELAYED RESPONSE?

Questions have been asked about why the UK government scientists didn't sound the alarm over the new variant of coronavirus until last week despite discovering it two months ago...

SEPTEMBER 20
First person in Kent to test positive for the new variant of Covid-19

MID-OCTOBER
The patient's sample is analysed at Milton Keynes Lighthouse Lab

DECEMBER 11
A New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) holds a discussion on the variant for the first time

DECEMBER 13
Public Health England reports that a total of 1108 cases have been detected

DECEMBER 14
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care reveals the news to the public

DECEMBER 16
UK PM Borris Johnson says Christmas plans will not be scrapped

DECEMBER 20
Findings reveal that variant is 70 % more transmissible, Christmas is cancelled. Countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Ireland and Canada issue travel ban to and from the UK

BRRR...

Stray cats eat at the pipe of the city heating system during a frosty day in Omsk, Russia on Saturday. The temperature dropped down to -32 degree Celsius | AP

NEW FLOWER FOUND IN 100 MILLION-YEAR-OLD AMBER

NATURE

LONDON: A piece of gum found in Myanmar found feeding flowers 100 million years ago. Researchers from Oregon State University in the US identified the flower as a new species of covered BG (angiosperms) or a flower. This flower was found in the Cretaceous period. This flower was frozen in a piece of knees and now it has come out after so many years.

Dubbed Valviloculus pleristaminis, it belongs to the laurel family and is related to the blackheart sassafras found in Australia. Myanmar and Australia are divided by more more than 4,000 miles of ocean but, at the time this flower was encased in resin, they were part of a supercontinent known as Gondwanaland.

The discovery of V. pleristaminis suggests the continental plate it was on separated from Gondwanaland much later than previously theorised. The stamen is the part of the male flower that produces pollen, while the anther is the stamen's pollen-producing head.

"Despite being so small, the detail still remaining is amazing," Poinar, author of a report on the discovery in the Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas told Daily Mail. He and his colleagues at OSU and the Department of Agriculture named the flower — which is both a new genus and species — Valviloculus pleristaminis.

In the Cretaceous period, flower was trapped in resin from an extinct tree

Valva is the Latin term for the leaf on a folding door, loculus means 'compartment,' plerus refers to 'many,' and staminis reflects the flower's dozens of male sex organs.

The specimen was probably part of a cluster on a plant with similar flowers, Poinar added, 'some possibly female.' Besides its beauty, the fossilised flower is noteworthy because of the journey it took: It bloomed on the ancient supercontinent Gondwanaland and was encased in amber before hitching a ride on a continental plate known as the West Burma Block. That plate slowly shifted from Australia to Southeast Asia.

FACT OF THE MATTER

Four eclipses next year

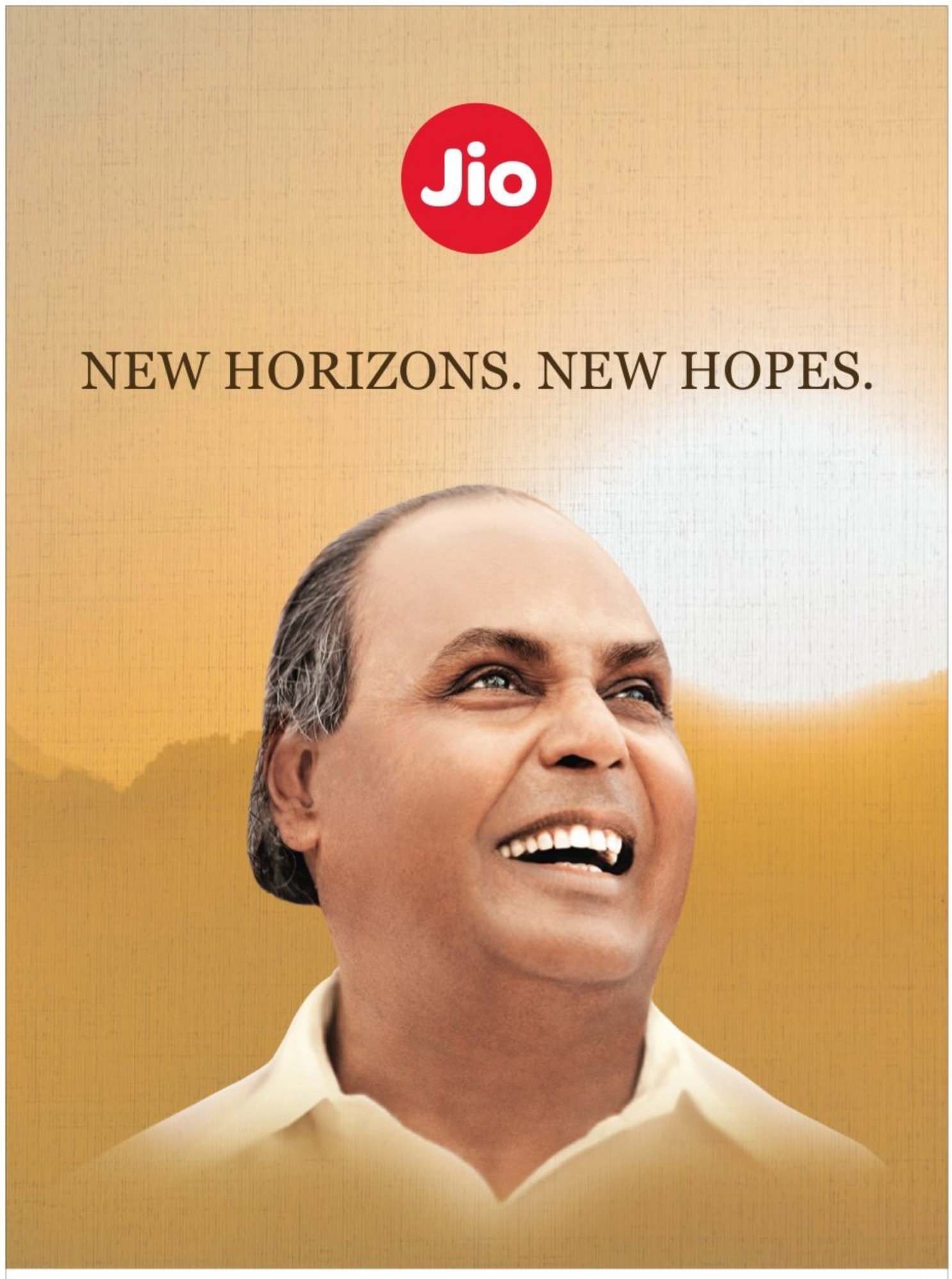
ASTRONOMY

There will four eclipses in 2021, including one total solar eclipse and one total lunar eclipse, but only two will be visible from India, Ujjain-based Jiwaji Observatory's Superintendent Dr Rajendraprakash Gupt said. He said that the first of these events will be on May 26, and will be seen in parts of West Bengal, coastal Odisha and in the north-eastern states, except Sikkim, as the moon is visible in these places than other parts of the country. "The earth will cover the moon by 101.6 per cent during this event," he said. Gupt said the annular solar eclipse on June 10 will not be visible in India. This year, there were two solar and four lunar eclipses.

Third trimester ideal for jab

HEALTH

Scientists have found evidence of lower than expected transfer of protective antibodies against the coronavirus via the placenta from mothers who are infected in the third trimester, findings that shed light on critical windows in pregnancy that may be most desirable for vaccination. According to the researchers in the US, the findings may be explained by a process where the carbohydrate molecules in the body alter antibodies after they are produced. They explained that altered attachments of carbohydrates to the coronavirus-specific antibodies — a process called glycosylation — may be to blame for the reduced transfer from mother to fetus. In the study, published in the *Cell*, the scientists compared maternal antibodies against the flu (influenza), whooping cough (pertussis), and the novel coronavirus — SARS-CoV-2 — and how these antibodies transferred across the placenta.


Jio
NEW HORIZONS. NEW HOPES.
Dhirubhai Hirachand Ambani
Founder Chairman - Reliance Industries Limited
December 28, 1932 - Eternity
A billion hopes of Indians guided your vision. You explored new horizons
with a sense of mission. You built the foundation of a modern, industrial nation.
Today, Reliance is leading a resurgent India to a brave new future
of new materials and new technologies. You are always with us, yesterday,
today and tomorrow. Giving shape to new hopes and exploring new horizons.
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28•12•2020
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Birth anniversary

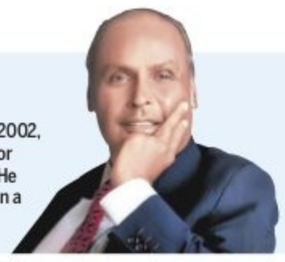
Dhirubhai Ambani, founder of Reliance Industries, was born in the village of Chorwad, in Saurashtra (Gujarat) on this day in 1932

LEGACY

His entrepreneurial journey began with Reliance Commercial Corporation in Mumbai in 1958. The company would continue to see growth years after his demise

DEMISE

Dhirubhai died on July 6, 2002, after being hospitalised for suffering a major stroke. He was in coma for more than a week before his death



HERE TO STAY

With a view to imbue students with entrepreneurship, Gujarat government is likely to introduce a chapter on Reliance Group founder Dhirubhai Ambani in school textbooks

'I couldn't have asked for more this year'

PG 4

As we turn a corner, prominent Bengalureans look back and share their takeaways from the year that was filled with despair and bleak rays of hope. From bonding with family, unlearning what they were used to, and just being grateful, they reveal their big learnings to **Vidya Iyengar**

ROLL UP 2021 ROLL IN

Over the last decade, I took a decision to invest in people. It began close to home where I invested in the right staff, then moved into the gallery where I brought in the right work force. I started two foundations. Through the course of it all, the circle kept expanding. Many times I thought that maybe I'm doing too much – you have to handle people carefully, there are costs, time and energy involved. Now, I look back and realise that this was one of the best decisions I made.

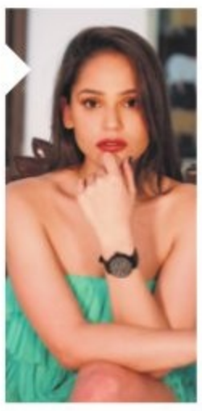
— **Gitanjali Maini**, founder & managing director, Gallery g

This year, people from all walks of life came together to uplift and support the most vulnerable parts of our society. Our firm became a small part of that resilient effort to ensure our cities remained accessible for everyone. As we transitioned from a lifestyle choice to an integral lifeline for our cities, we learned that by focussing on the people we serve, we were able to create an impact not only on our communities but also the business, affirming the belief that being customer-obsessed is the best business answer.

— **Kabeer Biswas,** CEO & founder, Dunzo

Lockdown, for me, was not about what I learnt but rather what I had to unlearn. Before the pandemic, I was a year into starting a new business and that was my entire life. I failed to see the importance in anything else. When the world came to a screeching halt, I didn't know what to do with myself or even how to process being idle. It was hard on me initially, but forced me to take a look at my school of thought and what I perceived as a well-rounded life. I had to reject who I was on a cellular level and learn to find contentment in stillness. Now, my happiness is not solely dependent on my work and to me that was a massive win!

— **Aviva Bidapa,** designer



I have learned that sometimes in life you need to step back and re-evaluate what is important to you. My family is the most important part of my life and the pandemic has made me realise that. It is faith and family which endures forever. The most important lesson I have learned is to cherish relationships and to treat people with respect .Try and be the best version of yourself, live in the moment and make the best of anything life may throw at you. What seemed to be big problems, now seem small compared to what we are dealing with. I hope that when we return to a pandemic-free society, we appreciate all the things we take for granted.

— **Bassam Osman,** fashion designer

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

I am an incorrigible spendthrift, who often preached, 'Save for a rainy day!'. But the pandemic taught me to practise this as well. It also taught me to enjoy my own company, because otherwise, I always lived and loved company. When you don't have a choice, you learn to even start enjoying routine chores. On a lighter note, I also realised the full form of OTT is Oxygen Treatment for Timepass!

— **Padmaja Rao**, actress, director

Illustration: EXPRESS

I t has been a fruitful year, as I have been trying my hand at different things – learning Hindi, song writing, and doing 100 crunches to get those abs even though I'm a junk food junkie.

— **Behram Siganporia,** musician

The biggest realisation in this year has been Voltaire's words, 'Every man is guilty of all the good he did not do'. Fleeting life will make you regret all the good that you didn't do, and teach you not to celebrate our egos or victories.

— **Captain Manivannan,** secretary, fisheries and animal husbandry dept

My seven-year-old twins feel that the best thing that happened to them was the lockdown. In their words, they got uninterrupted time with their parents. I didn't realise how much they missed us. The year 2020 has been about bonding and focussing on health and keeping our spirits up.

— **Nisha Millet,** swimmer

TALKING POINTS

'LOW-DOWN'

The year turned out to be a shocker with the pandemic spreading its tentacles world-wide. As we grappled with the new normal, the migrant exodus left many enraged. Unexpected turn of events, including the death of several prominent figures, including Pranab Mukherjee, SP Balasubrahmanyam, and Rishi Kapoor, left many wanting the year to come to a close as quickly as possible. The heartbreaks didn't stop there.

OLYMPICS: The cancellation of the much-awaited 2020 Olympics in Japan turned out to be a blow for sportspersons and enthusiasts alike. All eyes are set on next year now.

IPL: Even as fans mourned the move of IPL 2020 to the Dubai 'bubble', Bengalureans were hit harder when RCB lost at the fag end.

KOCHI-MUZIRIS BIENNALE: The fifth edition of the Biennale was postponed when the organisers decided to stay on the side of caution.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

- When the fear of Covid-19 was at an all-time high in March-April, an audio clip, attributed to **Dr Devi Shetty**, advising people against getting tested for coronavirus, was doing the rounds. The clip was debunked by Narayana Health on social media.
- Twitterati went berserk when football legend Diego Maradona passed away in November. Amidst this, a fake screenshot of outgoing US President Donald Trump's tweet confusing Maradona for singer Madonna went viral. The tweet read, "Very sad to hear about the death of Maradona. A great person. Her music was wonderful. I remember listening to her albums in the early 1980s. Rest In Peace!"
- As people worried about the fate of businesses, a message from Tata Sons chairman Ratan Tata came with some hope. Until it turned out to be fake. The industrialist was quoted saying that 2020 was the year to stay alive and people should not worry about businesses, and instead focus on staying healthy. Tata took to Twitter to call out the hoax.
- 'Read the opinion Bill Gates has about Indian people' attributed to the Microsoft honcho was circulated on WhatsApp. The viral message, which 'explained' why Indian farmers remain poor and die by suicide, turned out to be fake.

G ULAGANATHAN

The master moves on

On December 23, he celebrated his 87th birthday. The only difference this year was that he had to celebrate it from the hospital bed in New Delhi. Otherwise it always used to be in the company of dancers, critics, friends and celebrities.

But it was different this year for Dr Sunil Kothari, the well-known dance historian, scholar and critic. He may not have imagined that it would be his last birthday. He tested Covid-positive in November, and spent his last days in solitude — something he hated all his life. He was in ICU for about 10 days, and was discharged last week. He suffered a cardiac arrest on Saturday evening and passed away the next morning. Incidentally, he, along with 15 others, including Birju Mahraj, was served an eviction notice by the government, and asked to vacate his flat by December-end. Now he has moved out forever.

A bachelor, his life was dedicated to dance. He was born in a Gujarati family, and followed the family diktat, becoming a chartered accountant. But he strayed into the world of dance, influenced by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Rukmini Devi Arundale and Mrinalini Sarabhai, among others. Kothari authored over 20 books, his recent one being *Sattriya Dances of Assam*. He was lately working on his autobiography in Gujarati and English. Among his many awards, three stand out – Padma Shri, Life Time Achievement Award of Dance Critics Association, New York; and the recent award as Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi.

I first met him in 1984 at the Khajuraho dance festival. I was there to write a feature. He tutored me on dance, culture, and even on dancers. We struck a close rapport and travelled to many cities for dance events. He took pride in introducing himself as a dance critic, not a scholar.

He did his research on the Bhagavata Mela tradition and Kuchipudi though he could not speak or understand Telugu. I used to accompany him in the '80s and '90s all over the then Andhra Pradesh, and act as an interpreter. What appealed to me was his attention to detail and humility. He was keen on understanding the meaning of every word in the Telugu sahityas and lyrics. He was a master of many languages, including Hindi, Gujarati and Bengali, and fluent in Sanskrit and French.

Though he had a special love for Kuchipudi, Sunil treated every dance form as asset to the country. He would even take notes after talking to the artistes. He had the patience and will to sit until the end of any programme, be it by famous dancers or kids. "Every dancer may be good or bad on stage and will try to impress you. As dancers we have to understand it," he said.

Being a 'Triloka Sanchari' as he was called, he had contacts all over the world. He used to maintain different address books, in which details of dancers and institutions were written country-wise and city-wise. He was a one-stop shop to get any contact. He also kept perfect accounts of all the expenses, like taxi fare and hotel bills, for claiming reimbursement. He never accepted a single rupee more than what he had spent. The festival organisers loved him. Sunil relished all types of food, and wasn't fussy about transport. I still remember our travel across Hyderabad and Secunderabad on my motorcycle in the late eighties.

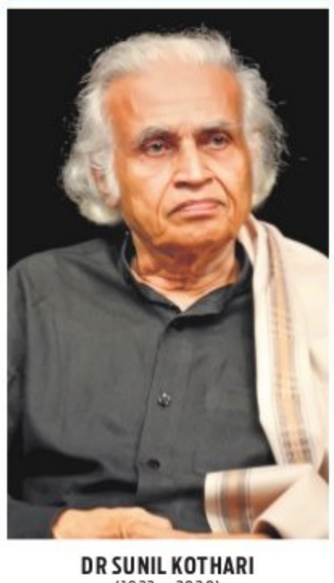
He quickly adapted to social media, and had thousands of followers. He kept in touch through email. A month ago, both of us were on Zoom to pay tribute to Sobha Naidu, who passed away in Hyderabad. He rued, "We used to meet every month in person but now we are forced to interact through cameras. I don't like it but we have no other option."

He showed respect to all human beings. Whether it was a dancer, organiser or an accompanying artiste, he spent time talking to them, and enquired about their families. He remembered the names of thousands of acquaintances, and politely interacted with waiters, drivers and security guards. "Everyone has their job cut, and we should respect that. Never argue with them or throw your weight around," he said.

He was 'Mr Nice' to everyone, and will remain so for all those who knew him.

(The writer is a senior dance critic based in Bengaluru)

IN REMEMBRANCE



DR SUNIL KOTHARI
(1933 – 2020)

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

FESTIVE MENU

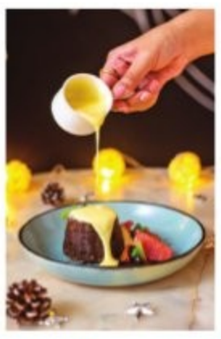
Sly Granny has introduced a new festive special menu, which includes Sweet Potato and Gruyere Croquettes, Braised Pork Belly, and Christmas cocktails like Spiced Apple Pie, Snow Capped Sour, and Mulled wine. **Where:** Sly Granny, Indiranagar **When:** Till Jan. 5

DAZZLING FESTIVAL

To celebrate the glory and beauty of diamonds, GRT Jewellers are offering up to 25% off on diamonds and uncut diamonds through their Dazzling Diamond Festival. They are also offering attractive benefits on platinum jewellery and oriana diamonds. **Available at:** all GRT stores

THE RUG WAY

Make each room in the house joyful and splendid with indoor rugs from Kaleen India. There is a wide assortment of shades and patterns you can choose from. **Available at:** kaleenloomwork.com. **For details, email:** mail@kaleen-india.com



WINTER MENU

Here's some winter fare that can chase away those chills. Prepared using local seafood, meats, and seasonal produce, the menu contains a mix of warming soups, mains and desserts. **Where:** Smoke House Deli, Lavelle Road and Indiranagar **When:** Ongoing

TRY OUT THE 'Biryani & Pulao Collection' by the ITC Hotels. **TO ORDER, CALL:** 080-61401227, 080-61401205

DIY perfume journey

ISAK Labs brings to you a unique box to stimulate your olfactory senses and 'Make your own Perfume'. There are 12 ingredients/bases ready for perfumery along with an ISAK Lab Workbook with notes, formula sheets, and space to take down your personal notes. The detailed instructions and steps will guide you through the process, helping you explore your creativity while mesmerising you through the creation of your unique bespoke perfume. Priced at ₹2,700. **Available at:** isakfragrances.com, silkayra.com, storyofindia.in, scentkraft.com

Take a bao

Craving some baos? Order these boxes that come with 12 pieces of steamed baos, Hoisin sauce, house soy ketchup, pickled cucumber with fresh red chillies, lettuce and roasted spiced peanuts. For the fillings you have a choice of Chilli Basil Chicken, Char Siu Pork Belly, Cantonese style roasted pork belly and the Soy Garlic Shitake which is a preparation of overnight marinated steamed shitake mushroom. **Price:** ₹2,500 onwards **Details:** 9606071430

Wine for the times

Grover Zampa Vineyards is all set to add to the festive spirit with its latest and newest offering. India's wine producer introduces bottled mulled wine – One Tree Hill Mulled Wine. This wine gives an Indian twist to this European classic. Priced at ₹650. **For details, visit:** grovezampa.in

New year special

Say hello to the new year with Johnnie Walker presents NYE 2021: The Party You Deserve. The cover charge (Singles: ₹2,000 & Couples: ₹3,000) includes your food and drinks. **Where:** Social branches in city **When:** Dec. 31, 4pm - 9.30pm

Gift happiness with William Penn

William Penn offers premium products which can be personalized for the perfect gift. Choose from an amazing range of top-notch, iconic fine writing instruments or the timeless classic card holders and wallets, journals, notebooks, bags and tech products. **Available at:** williampenn.net

Velammal's own Margazhi utsav

Velammal School is set to host Digital Margazhi Utsav 2020 , featuring sessions by popular singers Srinivas, Anuradha Sriram, Nithyashree Mahadevan, Shravan, Sai Charan and many others. The festival will be live-streamed at 6 pm till January 5. **Watch it at:** Velammal Nexus YouTube channel.

Ethnic wear

Check out the Kala Silk Cotton Expo for some dress materials, sarees and handicraft items from various parts of the country. Collections from 20 states, including Rajasthan, Bihar, and UP have been included in the 100 stalls. When: Till Dec. 29, 10am onwards Where: Sri Dwarka Convention Hall, Nanjappa Circle

Festive shopping

Phoenix Marketcity Bengaluru is all decked up in Christmas decor that includes a lights display, a Christmas tree, Santa welcoming visitors and more. Shoppers can also stand a chance to win prizes worth ₹1 crore, car, bike, etc. **Where:** Phoenix Marketcity **When:** Ongoing

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

RIDGE GOURD MILK KOOTU

INGREDIENTS

- **Ridge Gourd -** 250 g cut & diced into about 1/2 an inch
- **Ground Nuts -** 2 tbsp
- **Milk -** 50 ml or as per taste
- **Salt, Mustard, Oil, Curry leaves**

Grinding

- **Dry red chillies -** 5 to 6
- **Pepper, Poppy seeds, Rice -** 1 tsp
- **Garlic -** 6 cloves ■ **Grated coconut -** 2 tbsp

METHOD

- Dry roast mildly and separately red chillies, pepper, poppy seeds and put in a mixie jar.
- Add garlic and grated coconut to the roasted ingredients and grind to a smooth paste.
- Take just sufficient water in a thick-bottomed vessel, add ridge gourd and groundnuts, cook till the ridge gourd is just about soft. Add salt. Add the ground paste and adequate water, bring it boil so that masala mixes well; stir occasionally so that the kutoo is semi thick.
- After turning of the flame, add milk.
- Temper it with mustard and curry leaves.
- Serve this with hot rice or ragi balls.

— N Raama Prasad, Bengaluru

FIT BIT

PRITHVI MUDRA

(EARTH MUDRA)

In Sanskrit, Prithvi means 'the vast one' and known as Earth; mudra means 'gesture,' 'mark' or 'seal.' It is a symbol of the hand 'gesture' or 'seal' used in yoga. According to Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine, the physical body is made up of five elements; Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Space. Imbalance in any one of these elements is the root cause of illness and disease. Hence, treatments tend to focus on bringing each element back into balance. Since the ring finger symbolises earth and the thumb is fire, this gesture can be used to bring balance between these two elements. It is a powerful mudra, capable of healing many ailments.

STEPS

- Sit in any comfortable seating posture and place the hands with palm pointing upwards on the thighs or the knees.
- Meditation postures like Padmasana, Siddhasana, Swastikasana, Vajrasana, etc. are ideal for the practice of mudras. Close your eyes and take some deep breaths with the awareness of the breathing process.
- Now fold your ring finger and tap the tip of the ring finger to the tip of the thumb.
- The rest of the three fingers should be kept extended as much as possible.
- Removing all thoughts from the mind has to focus the mind only on OM.
- It should be done with both hands simultaneously.
- Don't decrease or increase the speed of breath from your side.
- Perform for 35 minutes at a stretch every day or for 10 to 12 minutes three times a day.
- It can also be practiced by standing in Tadasana, otherwise sitting on a chair.

BENEFITS

- Who are low in weight and who want to gain weight can practice this mudra.
- It improves body strength and removes weakness.
- Famously known for increasing the Prithvi (earth) element within the body. It is a vital component of bodily tissues.
- It can be used to overcome nasal disorders and Kapha deficiency.
- Increases the immunity of the body.

LIMITATIONS

- Don't force your fingers to be extended. Don't press the tips of fingers too hard.
- Not recommended for pregnant women.
- Avoid wearing any jewellery on your hand.

– by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

SOUND BOARD

HOW TO SAVE A PLANET

From global warming to climate crises, journalist Alex Blumberg and scientist Ayana Elizabeth Johnson talk to people who are making a difference by asking hard questions to build the future we want.

- On Apple Podcasts

THE SPLENDID TABLE

With food journalist Francis Lam at the helm, this podcast offers fresh voices and surprising conversations at the intersection of food, people and culture – covering everything from the global appeal of sesame to the impact of Instagram on everyday eating.

- On Spotify

THE CUT

The Cut is a weekly audio magazine exploring culture, style, sex, politics and more. Each week, an ensemble of voices, led by host Avery Trufelman, engages in the conversations that matter most in the current moment.

- On Spotify

DARE TO LEAD WITH BRENE BROWN

Dare to Lead podcast is based on author Brene Brown's book under the same name. The episodes will feature conversations with change-catalysts, culture-shifters, and as many troublemakers as possible.

- On Apple Podcasts

SCIENCE VS

There are a lot of fads, blogs and strong opinions, but then there's also Science. Science Vs finds out what's the fact, what's not, and what's somewhere in between

- On Spotify

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

KOTIGOBBA 2

A real estate agent disguises himself as a robber and loots wealthy people. When the police begin the investigation, he tries to convince them that his identical twin brother is the culprit.

- Cast: Kichcha Sudeep, Nithya Menen

VAJRAKAYA

Viraj, an orphan adopted at a young age, discovers that his mother and grandfather are still alive. Soon, he embarks on a journey to meet his mother, who lives under the tyranny of her father.

- Cast: Shivarajkumar, Nabha Natesh, Karunya Ram

RAMA RAMA RE

An escaped death row convict ends up taking a road trip with an old man on a personal mission and a young couple trying to elope.

- Cast: Dharamanna Kadur, Nataraj S Bhat

JOOT

Eashwaran, a man from a small village, moves to his brother's house in Chennai with his ailing father. However, his life turns upside down when his brother incurs the wrath of a local thug.

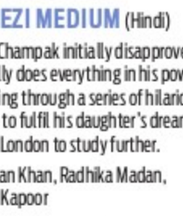
- Cast: Srikanth, Meera Jasmine

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 FRACTALS AND THE ART OF ROUGHNESS BY BENOIT MANDELBROT

At TED2010, mathematics legend Benoit Mandelbrot develops a theme he first discussed at TED in 1984 – the extreme complexity of roughness and the way that fractal math can find order within patterns that seem unknowably complicated.



2 MYSTERIES OF VERNACULAR: UKULELE BY JESSICA ORECK AND RACHAEL TEEL

When 19th century Portuguese travelers landed in Hawaii with a small four-stringed guitar, a member of the king's court, nicknamed Jumping Flea, or ukulele in Hawaiian, took to the instrument. Jessica Oreck and Rachael Teel explain how an affinity for the ukulele gave the instrument its name.

3 A PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR REFUGEES BY CHRYSTINA RUSSELL

Out of the more than 70 million displaced people worldwide, only three percent have access to higher education. The Global Education Movement is on a mission to change that with the first large-scale initiative of its kind to help refugee learners get bachelor's degrees.

4 THE POST-CRISIS CONSUMER BY JOHN GERZEMA

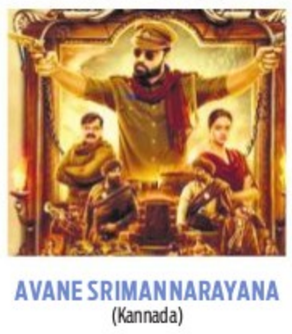
John Gerzema says there's an upside to the recent financial crisis – the opportunity for positive change. In this talk, he identifies four major cultural shifts driving new consumer behavior and shows how businesses are evolving to connect with thoughtful spending.

5 AN INNOVATIVE WAY TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS BY BILLY SAMUEL MWAPE

After his son was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Billy Samuel Mwape realized that his project management skills might be put to use to support his child's special needs.

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL



AVANE SRIMANNARAYANA (Kannada)

In pursuit of solving a long-held mystery of Amaravati, Narayana - the quirky new cop in the town - has to get past a dreaded clan of dacoits and its fierce leader Jairam.

Cast: Rakshit Shetty, Shanvi Srivastava, Achyuth Kumar

- Watch on: Amazon Prime Registration: ₹129 per month

OUT OF LOVE (Hindi, series)

Meera (Rasika) begins to suspect every female associate of Akarsh(Purab), her husband after she found a stray hair which is not hers. After discussing with her friend, she thought she might be over reactive but does not stop digging up for finding the evidence.

Cast: Harsh Chhaya, Rasika Dugal, Sanghmitra Hitaishi

- Watch on: Disney + Hotstar

URVI (Kannada)

After getting tricked into working at a brothel, a medical student joins forces with two of her co-workers to fight their unscrupulous exploiters.

- Cast: Sruthi Hariharan, Shraddha Srinath, Shweta Pandit
- Watch on: Netflix

BIRBAL TRILOGY (KANNADA)

A wrongly accused murderer who is helped by Advocate Mahesh Das despite of various threats faced by them during the investigation.

Cast: M. G. Srinivas, Suresh Heblikar, Rukmini Vasanth

- Watch on: Amazon Prime

BOMBHAAT (Telugu)

A tale of twisted love with sparks of Sci-Fi and a deadly plot of vengeance. A young engineer battling his comedic misfortune gets entangled in an epic revenge story between his God Father and the Mad Scientist chasing a powerful formula

Cast: Sai Sushanth Reddy, Simran Chowdary, Chandini Chowdary

- Watch on: Amazon Prime

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

ANGREZI MEDIUM (Hindi)

Though Champak initially disapproves, he eventually does everything in his power while going through a series of hilarious mishaps to fulfil his daughter's dream of going to London to study further.

Cast: Irrfan Khan, Radhika Madan, Kareena Kapoor

- Watch on: Disney + Hotstar

DURGAMATI: THE MYTH (Hindi)

A bureaucrat is imprisoned in a haunted house for interrogation. However, things take an unexpected turn when she gets possessed by a spirit.

Cast: Karan Kapadia, Mahie Gill, Bhumi Pednekar

- Watch on Amazon Prime

FOREIGN

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS (English)

Chris Gardner takes up an unpaid internship in a brokerage firm after he loses his life's earnings selling a product he invested in. His wife leaves him and he is left with the custody of his son.

Cast: Will Smith, Thandie Newton, Jaden Smith

- Watch on: Amazon Prime

SYLVIE'S LOVE (English)

A woman working at her father's record store in Harlem in the late 1950s meets an aspiring saxophone player.

Cast: Tessa Thompson, Nnamdi Asomugha, Eva Longoria

- Watch on: Amazon Prime

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (English)

Cast: Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton, Gwilym Lee

With his impeccable vocal abilities, Freddie Mercury and his rock band, Queen, achieve superstardom. However, amidst his skyrocketing success, he grapples with his ego, sexuality and a fatal illness.

- Watch on: Amazon Prime

THE MIDNIGHT SKY (English)

This post-apocalyptic tale follows Augustine, a lonely scientist in the Arctic, as he races to stop Sully and her fellow astronauts from returning home to a mysterious global catastrophe.

Cast: George Clooney, Felicity Jones, David Oyelowo

- Watch on: Netflix

SUBSCRIPTION

Netflix: ₹ 199 per month
Amazon Prime: ₹ 129 per month
Disney+Hotstar: ₹ 399 per year

RUBINATIONS
RUBI CHAKRAVARTI
Writer, actor and funny girl

THE NEW (AB)NORMAL

Another year is nearly coming to an end, and this time we can honestly say that we 'don't know where it went'! Things haven't changed all that much, and a false bonhomie abounds. As humans, we are predictable. Either we are overly cautious or we throw all caution to the winds. The people who suffer from this fallout are the motley crew of cautious yet daring people who work and play keeping in mind that there is a pandemic still raging outside. I think I fall into the third category, struggling to staying afloat amongst the adrenaline junkies who live dangerously and have no regard for anyone else's opinion or safety.

Parties, events and the like are on in full swing. The party planners are all popping out of the woodwork, sending invitations for the launch or relaunch of new stores, bars, restaurants, nail-cutting salons and 'the opening of a brown paper bag' as my good and popular (unnamed) friend would say! The funny part is that all the 'inviters ' assume a higher moral ground than their colleagues. Each one vying with each other by sending expensive gifts (read freebies), badmouthing and claiming they come from lofty antecedents when in truth no one knows or cares! If an invitation or a gift comes directly from the owners or partners of a store, hotel or restaurant, I readily concur that it is a great way of keeping in touch with your 'paying' customers, but otherwise... calm the 'freebie' down!

Since I have done nothing but eaten, loved and prayed (fervently) for the last nine months, it has been kind of 'heady' to go out for a bit. That is my 2.0 version of living dangerously! Most people are trying very hard to go back to 'the way we were'. For as many invitations that I have accepted, I have politely turned down double. 'Barely' wearing masks and immediately entering into an intimate 'ghus-phus' session is a wee bit scary. And when questioned about maintaining social distancing, the cretins whine about not being able to hear the next person clearly!

Israel Consul-General Jonathan Zadka & Hila, and Deputy Consul-General Ariel & Linoy

Even then I celebrated Hanukkah at The Taj West End at the invitation of the new Consul-General of Israel, Jonathan Zadka. He and his wife Hila hosted an elegant soiree where there was a cultural exchange of traditional foods between chef Sandeep and chef Shaun from Israel via a Zoom call. It's amazing how similar our cuisines are!

The Leela Palace was on my agenda quite often this fortnight, mostly because the staff is friendly and polite and every guest feels safe with all protocols in place. My son Adnan and I shot a vlog there as a part of his Loud Gay Brown and Totally honest series, where despite the presence of many guests, the staff was on their toes maintaining social distancing and mask protocols. The 'fam-jam' lunch, where my sister and my kids flew down from all over the world just to celebrate being with each other was superb! The food ranging from grills, Indian, Asian and a charcuterie table groaning under the weight of all that food, was truly uplifting.

The Sunday Brunch at ITC Gardenia was everything this season needs to bring cheer into our hearts. The family lounged at the Lotus Pavilion as the staff made us all feel special. The biryani and kebabs, the Middle-Eastern delicacies of shawarmas and wraps, the Southeast Asian dim-sums and gyozas and the platters of sushi and sashimi washed down with champagne was a sublime experience.

Here's hoping we have a safe year with no more political U-turns...

My tryst with Cyberpunk 2077

ARE YOU GAME?
Anusha Ganapathi

(This economics graduate spends her leisure time preparing for the zombie apocalypse)

December 9, 2020: The most awaited game of the decade releases tomorrow. Were all the memes worth it? Will customization really take an hour? When will I meet Cyberpunk Keanu Reeves, and why does this matter?

December 11, 2020: After a day-long installation and several hotfix updates on a console later, I was finally getting into the game's stride. It initially looked like a futuristic, blue-red-shiny version of Grand Theft Auto with phone calls, car stealing, wanted stars — the works. But the post-intro gameplay in Cyberpunk surprised me with its depth. Be it snippets of conversations from NPCs, data shards packed with fun stories, the websites on V's computer, and the items that you pick up from garbage — they all feel real. Not just in the graphical sense of the word, no. Real, like, every detail is unique, and it all fits right into the universe. The technology, the associated super-human powers that the players had, that our cybernetics could be hacked... it just... made sense. Real — like Night City could probably exist. Real, when V looks into the mirror, it's as if she looks into — and I have nothing to show for it – not even memories. The countless, constant tech-upgrades on flesh make me feel less human. I am not complaining though, the brand new Kiroshi Cyberoptics that were implanted are useful in combat. But I still must work on being quieter. The enemies find me almost too easily, and I have to endure a noisy, fiery battle of hacks and gunshots. I wonder how long it will take for me to repay the Ripperdoc for the implants. Soon is unlikely, unless someone leaves a huge pile of untraceable Eurodollars on the streets. I should sleep less and explore the city more. I might just chance upon some side-gigs that could help upgrade my skills. Maybe a couple of fights at Kabuki should do it. T-bug said I could even get a Second Heart if I had the money for it. But no, V, I must focus.

Sometimes, when I pause, I wonder if I am not real – and if there is someone outside, passively observing a BrainDance of my life. The world glitches in and out of sight at times, my car flies into the air, and Night City folks appear out of nowhere. I wonder if things will get better over time. It probably will.

December 12, 2077 (Night City): — my soul, is it really my own? The Arasaka stint took a lot out of me,

HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE

Love, life and everything in between. Investment banker-turned-singer Anjali Sankaran's debut single is an amalgamation of emotions and experiences

MONIKA MONALISA

Two years ago, Bengaluru-based singer **Anjali Sankaran** aka ANJ:LI, took a leap of faith when she left a lucrative career as an investment banker to devote all her time to music. It's the beginning of a long journey, but Sankaran is delighted about the release of her debut single, *The Game*, which is out on various streaming platforms.

According to Sankaran, the lyrics of the songs are metaphorical and are inspired from multiple stories of her life. "The songs speak about my journey, love and I look back at what happened with acceptance," says Sankaran, adding that the song was produced by Jonathan Wesley. The singer, who is in her 20s, also explains that she has tried to express herself through metaphors. For instance, she compares a blackout from alcohol to someone in a toxic relationship. "In both the cases, they are functional but are not able get out of it," she adds.

The song was supposed to be released at the beginning of the year, but due to the lockdown, plans were pushed. "The song was ready but I wanted to release it with a video, which took time to shoot and produce. But now that it's out, I am happy and fulfilled," says Sankaran, whose video has trippy visuals with an underwater feel so as to give a cinematic experience.

Though this is her first original, Sankaran's last cover of *Brown Skin Girl*, originally by Beyoncé, went viral on Instagram. "I started doing covers only by the end of last year but was not active. During the lockdown, I became more regular about posting videos, which were mostly shot at home," mentions Sankaran, admitting that *Brown Skin Girl* has been the most liked one with close to 33,000 views on Instagram. "When I do a cover, I like to do my research on what the feel of the song is. *Brown Skin Girl* is about accepting who you are and your culture. I was very sure that I wanted to do the video wearing a kasavu saree," explains Sankaran, who is a trained Carnatic singer. Growing up with a lot of classic rock and '70s and '80s pop, she became a part of college choirs and acapella groups. "Although I can sing softer tunes, due to my Carnatic training, I can also sing powerful notes. But at this point, I am trying to find my space," says Sankaran, who also listens to Adele, Beyonce , Alicia Keys, and Nina Simone.

> **The songs speak about my journey, love and I look back at what happened with acceptance.The song was ready but I wanted to release it with a video, which took time to shoot and produce. But now that it's out, I am happy**
>
> Anjali Sankaran, singer

Upping the beauty game

PAIRED WITH PANACHE
Anuja Pandey

The onset of winter marks the transition in our beauty routine, including how we take care of our hair and skin and what we eat. Hence, nailing down a routine that reverses hair damage due to harsh weather, water, heat treatments and chemicals is what we require to get lust-worthy skin and hair on fleek.

Vitamin Happiness

Incorporating a healthy regimen of hair and skin care is just a Netflix, ouch, a click away. A weekly mask ritual when you nourish your hair and skin is what each one of us needs. It could be as brief as finishing an interesting series on Netflix and sipping some hot herbal tea with notes of vanilla or a kahwa tea with saffron in it. It's all about detoxifying yourself inside out. Pick up destressing ways like reading, listening to music, practising meditation or yoga and sleep well. The idea is to replenish yourself with 'Vitamin Happiness'.

Nutrition

Drinking water, soaking in some Vitamin D and having nutrient-rich food is the secret to being healthy and hence, having shiny, bouncy hair and supple skin. Korean hair care is a fad these days. You could surely give it a try. Your kitchen is the solution to all the distress in life. Protein-rich soybeans, kale, moringa, spinach, nuts, eggs, etc, are superfoods for hair. Kimchi consists of fermented veggies and seasonings that are a powerhouse of nutrients. A study showed that kimchi and cheonggukjang (soya paste) help in increasing the thickness of hair. Food is always medicine. Let's see how to work wonders with our self care regime and have a magical beginning to the new year.

Sparkle and glow

1. Cleansing, toning, moisturising is the holy grail to skin care. You can add a vitamins-infused serum to it too. Oil-based cleansers prevent drying of skin.
2. Raw milk with honey is amazing for sensitive skin and cleanses while maintaining the pH balance of the skin in winters.
3. The age-old rice flour mixed with some yoghurt kills the bacteria as it contains lactic acid and is a great exfoliant. There are some cream-based exfoliants available in the market for sensitive skin. A spray of rose water mixed with some glycerin is a refreshing toner to close the pores after you exfoliate.
4. Hyaluronic acid-based moisturisers take care of not just sensitive skin but help to prevent ageing as well since it's a humectant. It grabs onto moisture so your skin is firmer.
5. A weekly mask to hydrate skin is a must. Avocados make great masks. Fresh turmeric ground with almonds and mixed with raw milk and drops of olive oil is a mask lending sheen to your skin.
6. Coffee beans ground and mixed with coconut oil and hemp seeds make a wonderful body scrub while coffee uplifts your mood as well. A scented candle aromatherapy bath with a few drops of essential oils is detoxifying.

De-stress tresses

- Wash hair with sparkling or carbonated water once a week. When used on the scalp, natural sparkling water is believed to slough through dead skin cells for a cleansed scalp.
- Choosing shampoos that are paraben and sulphate free is essential to prevent hair from further damage that has been caused by overuse of chemicals and heat treatments.
- Avocados and bananas make a smoothening hair mask. Yogurt mixed with soaked and pasted fenugreek seeds in equal portions does wonders as it is loaded with protein.
- Running a vinegar rinse through the last wash of hair keeps the pH balance.
- To boost circulation, applying a scalp toner loaded with alpha and beta hydroxyl acids is the Korean way to keep hair glossy, you could use a hair toner on the roots and a hair serum on the length of your hair. A weekly hair oil massage is still the grandma's therapy that shall hold true always.

Too cute

We can't get over this cute photograph that actor Aindrita Ray shared on Instagram. Decked for the season was not just the actor but also her pet dog who wore a Christmassy headgear. It was captioned: "Spread joy n cheer into someone else's life n make it merry this Christmas."

High note

Model Nicole Faria celebrated her first anniversary, which she shared on social media. "To the one person who has stood by my side through every hurdle life has thrown at me for the past 8 years, the one person who has made me smile, pushed me to experience half the things I would have never imagined, the one person who brings out the best version of me every single day deserves to be cherished and celebrated today and every day. I love you! Happy anniversary sweetheart," she captioned a photograph she uploaded on the occasion.

SMART ADS

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'I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR MORE THIS YEAR'

The pandemic notwithstanding, 2020 has been a fruitful year for actor Diganth, who completed a host of projects in the past few months

A SHARADHAA

Despite the uncertainty due to the pandemic, 2020 has been a fruitful year for Diganth, on the professional as well as the personal front. With a series of projects lined up, the actor became busy post lockdown and has completed the shooting of a couple of films. While the makers of *MariGold* are coming up with the first-look poster on his birthday, today, other filmmakers also have plans to hold poster releases to make the day more special for the actor. Basking in the joy of being busy, Diganth says, "I was happy to be a part of *Gaalipata 2* by Yogaraj Bhat. It was a successful film, and after 10 years, I am glad to get associated with the sequel. It is going to be a movie to look forward to. I am also looking forward to *Huttu Habbada Shubhasayagalu,* which is ready for release. This will be followed by *MariGold*, for which I have completed the shooting post lockdown. It is a fast-paced comedy-thriller about heists, and is a script that I liked personally and enjoyed shooting. My other film, *Kshamisi Nimma Katheyalli Hanavilla,* becomes special because has me paired opposite Aindrita Ray, after seven years. Apart from that, there is the *Evaru* remake, which is a thriller, and that sums up my year. Career wise, I think I couldn't have asked for more this year. Despite the pandemic, and not working for six months, I managed to cover the projects in the second half of the year."

While many people stayed indoors for weeks together, Diganth says he was happy to get closer to nature. "The things that I couldn't do during normal times, I managed to do during the Covid-19 outbreak, and that included a lot of sports activity. I learned rock climbing, which was one thing I wanted to be a part of for a long time. Of course, cycling has now become part of my life journey. I also learned Kung-fu, and surfing," says Diganth.

According to him, the present situation requires us to take precautions, but that doesn't mean we should be staying home all the time. "I have seen my friends from the industry suffering. All I say is that people should take safety measures till the vaccine arrives. Having said that, we can't sit at home in the name of the pandemic. A lot of people have lost their jobs, and as far the film industry is concerned, the daily wage workers have hit the rock bottom economically. All these reasons are enough to head to work but all with safety measures," he explains.

While Diganth is looking forward to the release of his films, he is also in talks with filmmakers for future projects. "Director Srinivas has come up with a story around the latest sports activities. He was inspired by my rock climbing and Kung-fu skills and has sketched my character accordingly. His story comes with a social message about an ordinary man's extraordinary journey. The discussions are at a preliminary stage, and if everything goes well, we will confirm the title and other details in January. I am also in talks with *Sharp Shooter,* director Ghouse Peer for another project, which is also at an initial stage," he says.

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>
> —Diganth, actor

Bhuvann Ponnanna

Bhuvann Ponnanna's *Pranaya Raja* to feature 21 heroines

The film's title, which means 'King of Romance', is the nickname of yesteryear hero Srinath; its teaser is expected to be launched by the senior actor on his birthday on Dec. 30

CE FEATURES

Bhuvann Ponnannaa, the hero of *Randhawa* and Bigg Boss contestant, will next be seen in a romantic drama, and the first point of attraction for the film is its title – *Pranaya Raja*. This is the nickname of Sandalwood's yesteryear actor Srinath, which he earned for his stupendous success in romantic films during the 1970s, and means the 'King of Romance'. The film will be directed by T Sudarshan Chakra, and the makers are planning to launch it on the actor's birthday on December 30. Discussions are on with Srinath to unveil the film's title and teaser. The movie is expected to star 21 heroines, including three female leads. As many as 18 of them have been signed up so far, and the line-up consists of artistes from Karnataka, Mumbai, Bengal and other film industries. *Pranaya Raja* will be made under the banner of Lycra Productions in association with Kollur Mookambika house. It has music by Vikas Raj Vasishta and cinematography by Raja Shiva Shankar. Vikram Mor will handle the stunts. Sudarshan Chakra, who has previously assisted Om Prakash Rao, is now getting ready to begin the shooting in January.

Srinath

Rashmika Mandanna and Amitabh Bachchan to star in Vikas Bahl's *Daddy*: reports

CE FEATURES

Rashmika Mandanna will co-star alongside Amitabh Bachchan in Vikas Bahl's next, say reports. The film will be a slice-of-life story about a father and a daughter. Titled *Daddy,* the project will have a big ensemble cast including Neena Gupta and others, the report adds.

It was recently announced that Rashmika will make her Bollywood debut in *Mission Majnu.* The film, starring Siddharth Malhotra, is a spy thriller set in the 1970s. Speaking about her Hindi debut, Rashmika had shared, "I have been fortunate to receive so much love from audiences across languages. As an actor, it is always the story of the film that I connect with, and the language of the film is never a barrier for me." Vikas Bahl's last release was *Super 30.* He is also helming *Ganapath,* an upcoming dystopian action thriller starring Tiger Shroff.

Amitabh Bachchan and Rashmika Mandanna

CE FEATURES

Dhruva Sarja's *Pogaru* is getting a Tamil version, titled *Semima Thmirru.* An official announcement on this was made by the *Pogaru* hero on his Twitter handle on Sunday. The film features Rashmika Mandanna as the female lead. The makers had earlier announced that the Kannada film will be dubbed and released in Telugu. It is now set to make some buzz in Tamil cinema as well. The Hindi and Telugu dubbing rights of the mass entertainer, produced by BK Gangadhar and directed by Nanda Kishore, have fetched a good amount. The film is ready now, and the process of dubbing it in other languages is underway. The production house wants to release it early next year. Producer Gangadhar had earlier told *CE* that the team is looking at a January release. The film will show Dhruva Sarja in a notorious avatar and Rashmika Manadanna as a college professor. *Pogaru* also features Dhananjay playing a prominent role, along with Mayuri, Ravi Shankar and Chikkanna. Its music has been composed by Chandan Shetty. Background score is by V Harikrishna, while the camera work has been handled by Vijay Milton.

Pogaru also features bodybuilders Kai Greene, Morgan Aste, Johan Lucas and Jo Linder in the climax segment, which is said to be one of the highlights.

Pogaru's Tamil version titled *Semima Thmirru*

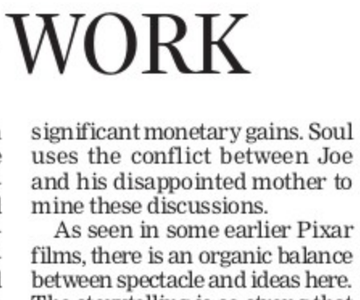
The Kannada film starring Dhruva Sarja will also be dubbed and released in Telugu

A still from *Pogaru*

Jackie Shroff to play Salman's quirky superior in *Radhe*

CE FEATURES

Jackie Shroff reunites with Salman Khan in *Radhe: Your Mosted Wanted Bhai.* After essaying Salman's father in *Bharat* (2019). In the film, Jackie plays a quirky police inspector who commands Salman's character. On completion of Jackie's shoot, an interesting piece of detail was shared. A source said, "Jackie has played cops in the past but this time the approach to the role is a light-hearted one.



SOUL: PIXAR DELIVERS ANOTHER LIFE-AFFIRMING WORK

SAJIN SHRIJITH

It's not every day that you come across a film that instantly finds a special place in your heart after the first 40 minutes alone. *Soul*, Pixar's latest, is one of those. It reminds us yet again why this is one of the best animation studios in the world. Soul is another Pixar film with a lot of heart and... soul.

The film's trailers had me believing the title is an allusion to the musical genre of the same name. The protagonist, Joe Gardner (Jamie Foxx), is a jazz pianist. But music is just a backdrop here. *Soul* goes way beyond that — and I mean that literally. A middle school music teacher with lofty aspirations, Joe finally thinks he has made it when jazz legend Dorothea Williams (Angela Bassett) allows him to be a pianist in her band. Unfortunately, fate has other plans. An incident lands him in a place that is sort of a bridge to the Great Beyond — what we usually call the 'afterlife'. But don't let those terms worry you — this is not a 'dark' film.

Joe gets caught in a situation similar to Albert Brooks in the live-action comedy classic, Defending Your Life. Joe gets stuck in a place best described as the Pixar version of the 'Limbo' in Inception. Speaking of which, Soul has as many layers as the Nolan film. Remember that line of Leonardo DiCaprio where he talks about creating a dream with its own rules? Well, Soul has some stunningly rendered dreamlike zones with their own rules and logic. They got me wondering whether these Pixar guys are privy to some life secrets we don't know. Take a zone called Great Before, where unborn souls — all adorable looking — have people who have already passed on as mentors. At one point, we get a funny montage featuring Mother Teresa, Muhammed Ali and other famous personalities.

Joe wants to get out of there, and his ticket is a stubborn unborn soul called 22 (Tina Fey), with whom he establishes a powerful bond. 22 has a problem. She doesn't think too highly of life even though she hasn't been born yet.

SOUL
Cast: Jamie Foxx, Tina Fey, Angela Bassett, Phylicia Rashad | **Director:** Pete Docter | **Streaming on:** Disney+ Hotstar

Beneath its dazzling colours and lighting, there's a world brimming with fantastic ideas and thought-provoking questions: Are we born with certain personality traits or are they shaped by our circumstances? Or did our souls undergo a 'personality-forming' process before we were born? And what would happen if the souls of two individuals get switched? In what I'd call the film's standout moment, we see Joe ending up in a cat's body and 22 ending up in Joe's. It's the stretch where we get the maximum laughs.

RATING 4.5/5

The beauty of Pixar films is how we sometimes find beauty and joy in the smallest of details. Soul is a perfect playground for director Pete Docter who explored the nature of emotions in his last film, Inside Out. We see how souls influence body language; how the characters sound amongst themselves, but different amongst others. I also enjoyed that witty, kid-friendly nod to When Harry Met Sally, where one character "wants to have" what the other is having. Interestingly, Pixar had used a similar moment in Ratatouille too — when the antagonist gets into a restaurant and orders the same dish the protagonist just had.

Soul also asks some meaningful questions — about the nature of passion, purpose, finding one's spark, and the difference between the last two. It also talks about finding joy in doing what you love, even if it doesn't bring significant monetary gains. Soul uses the conflict between Joe and his disappointed mother to mine these discussions.

As seen in some earlier Pixar films, there is an organic balance between spectacle and ideas here. The storytelling is so strong that the settings never become a distraction. Talk about perfect synchronicity.

Once again, I'm amazed by Pixar's ability to pick the right actors to voice their films. Jamie Foxx and Tina Fey are inspired casting choices. Their voices have that comforting, sitcom-friendly quality that works with both kids and grownups alike. Remember how Samuel Jackson sounded as Frozone in The Incredibles films? We get that with Foxx too.

I loved *Soul* for the same reasons I found other Pixar films such as *Ratatouille* and *Up endearing.*